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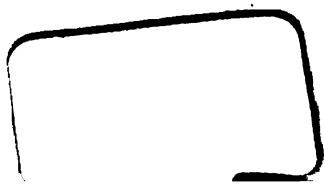


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# IN THE WAR

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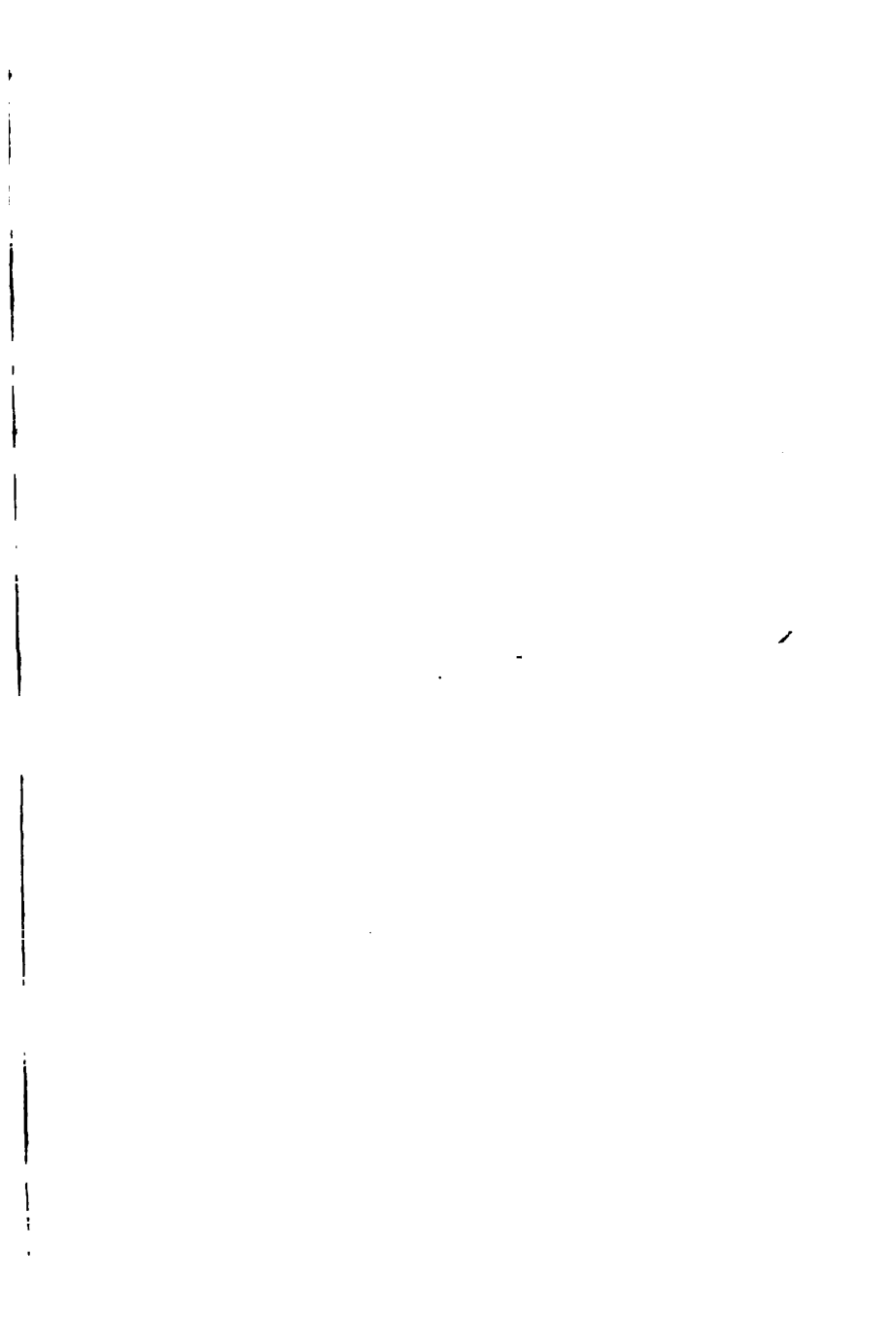
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*Card, Hist. Rev. (38)*

# IN THE WAR

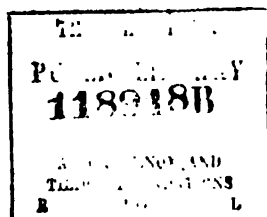
MEMOIRS OF  
V. VERESÁEV

TRANSLATED BY  
LEO WIENER  
PROFESSOR OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND  
LITERATURES AT HARVARD  
UNIVERSITY



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## FOREWORD

BYELÍNSKI recognized in Gógol the founder of the Natural School, which dethroned the romantic hero with his extravagant and exceptional achievements, and enlisted the reader's sympathy for the struggles, sufferings and defeats of plain, every-day characters. Military exploits immediately lost their favor as subjects of novels, and in the portrayal of war scenes the Russian authors sought out the humble soldiers with their passive resignation to fate, where formerly they had revelled in the glorification of generals and kings. Tolstóy began his career as a romanticist, and, besides his autobiographical sketches, wrote his *IncurSION*, a story of camp life in the Caucasus. This was but a flash in the pan. In 1855 the Crimean War broke out, and Tolstóy, in his Sevastopol sketches, described the terror and uselessness of battles, in which the only heroes were the patient soldiers who unflinchingly performed their duties, while the officers vied with each other in bravado, debauch, and cowardice. He returned to the recital of battle scenes in *War and Peace*, only to deny the existence of all military science, to belittle the genius of Napoleon, and to extol the Christian meekness of a peasant, Platón Karatáev.

The Turco-Russian War did not produce any marked literary denunciation of war, except in Garshín's *Four Days*, in which the terrible suffering of a wounded soldier was painfully recited. But Tolstóy's example was this time followed by the great painter Vereshchágin, who devoted all his energy to the reproduction of battle

scenes in such a realistic manner that they could only fill the spectator with abhorrence and hatred of war. The Russian Government found it necessary to prohibit exhibitions of his pictures as destructive of patriotism, that is, as creating a spirit unfavorable to the maintenance of military enthusiasm.

During the Russo-Japanese War, Vereshchagin once more set out to study battle scenes on the spot, but lost his life on one of the cruisers which was sunk by the Japanese. This time, however, it fell to the lot of a physician, Veresáev, to sketch the whole campaign in such a way as to deprive war of the last vestige of respect, and to bear out the novelist and the painter in every detail of their terrible denunciations. The abyss has been reached. The ignorance, incompetence, negligence and brutality of the superior officers are described in painful detail, and now even the soldiers have lost the aureole with which Tolstóy surrounded them. As a human document Veresáev's *In the War* is of prime importance. It is the most complete analysis of the ingloriousness of war yet obtained. The present European War will hardly produce anything more incisive than the works of the Russian novelist, painter and physician.

THE TRANSLATOR.

# IN THE WAR

## CHAPTER I

### AT HOME

JAPAN broke off her diplomatic relations with Russia. In the roadstead of Port Arthur the explosions of Japanese mines resounded one dark night amidst the peacefully-sleeping war-ships. In distant Chemulpo the lonely *Varyág* and *Koréets* perished after a titanic struggle with a whole squadron. The war began.

What was this war about? Nobody knew. For half a year conversations, unintelligible to all, had been going on in regard to the evacuation of Manchuria by the Russians. The clouds had been gathering heavier and heavier, and a storm was in the air. Our statesmen had been balancing the scales of war and peace with provoking hesitation. Now Japan definitely cast her lot on the scale of war.

The Russian patriotic newspapers began to seethe with military fervor. They shouted about the hellish treachery and Asiatic cunning of the Japanese, who had attacked us without a declaration of war. Manifestations were taking place in all the large cities. Crowds of people walked the streets with the Tsar's portraits in their hands, shouting "Hurrah!" and singing "God save the Tsar!" According to the newspapers, the audiences in the theatre persistently and unanimously demanded the singing of the national hymn. The armies that went eastward struck the newspaper



reporters by their fine appearance, and were anxious to begin battle. It looked as though Russia, from the top to the bottom, were seized by one mighty impulse of enthusiasm and indignation.

Of course, the war had not been provoked by Japan, and was incomprehensible on account of its uselessness; but what of that? If each small cell of the living body has its small, individual consciousness, it will not ask the question why the body has suddenly leaped up, why it makes an effort, why it struggles. The blood corpuscles will flow through the arteries, the muscular tissues will contract, each little cell will do its predetermined duty. But it is the business of the supreme brain to say what the struggle is for and where the blows are to fall. It is precisely this impression that Russia was making: she did not need the war, she did not understand it; but all her enormous organism was atremble with the mighty elation which had taken possession of her.

So it seemed from a distance, but it looked quite differently near by. The intellectuals were not at all hostilely provoked against the Japanese. They were not agitated by the question of the result of the war; there was not a trace of ill-feeling against the Japanese; our failures did not oppress them. On the contrary, side by side with the pain for the reckless and useless sacrifices, there went a feeling almost of malice. Many people went so far as to proclaim that Russia would be best served by a defeat. To the occasional observer, to whom the whole matter was incomprehensible, it looked as though something incredible was taking place. He saw the country at war, and yet at home the flower of its intelligence was following the struggle with hostile impatience. Foreigners were baffled and the "Patriots" were immeasurably provoked by "the rotten, aimless, cosmopolitan Russian intelligentsiya." But with the majority it was not at all a

real, broad cosmopolitanism which could say to its country, "You are wrong, your enemy is right"; nor was it an innate contempt for the bloody, sanguinary method of solving international quarrels. What really was striking in this matter, what now glaringly met the eye, was the immeasurably deep, universal hostility towards the rulers of the country that had begun the war. They, who had been leading up towards a struggle with the enemy, were themselves the most hated enemies and most foreign to the masses.

Again, the nation was experiencing something quite different from what the patriotic newspapers had been expecting. In the beginning there had, indeed, been some enthusiasm, the unconscious enthusiasm of the unthinking cell, that was carried away by the fervor of the organism aflame for the struggle. But the enthusiasm was only superficial and weak, and from the persistently shouting figures on the stage heavy threads were running behind the curtains, and the directing hands were visible.

I was at that time living in Moscow. During the Butter Week I happened to be in the Great Theatre, to see "Rigoletto." Before the overture, several voices in the pit and in the galleries demanded the national hymn. The curtain rose, the chorus on the stage sang the hymn, and an encore was demanded; and they sang a second and a third time. Then they passed over to the opera. Before the last act, when all were already in their places, single voices suddenly began to shout from various parts of the house, "The Hymn, the Hymn!" The curtain shot up at once. The chorus stood on the stage in a semicircle, dressed in their opera costumes, and they once more gave the three conventional repetitions of the hymn. But here was a strange matter. As is well known, the chorus has no part in the last act of "Rigoletto." Why, then, had they not changed their clothes and gone home? How could they

have had a presentiment of the growth of the patriotic enthusiasm of the public, and why had they arranged themselves in time on the stage, where they had no business to be? The next day the newspapers wrote: "In society may be observed an ever-growing *élan* of patriotic sentiments. Last night the audiences in all the theatres persistently demanded the singing of the national hymn, not only before the performance, but even before the last act."

The same suspicious element might have been observed in the street manifestations. The crowds were small and consisted to a great extent of street urchins. In the leaders of the manifestations people recognized policemen in civilian clothes. The attitude of the crowd was aggressive and insulting. They demanded of passers-by that they should take off their hats. Those who did not do so were beaten. When the crowd increased, there arose unforeseen complications. They almost demolished the "Hermitage" restaurant, and on Strastnáya Square mounted policemen drove off with knouts the overfervent demonstrators of patriotic enthusiasm.

The Governor General issued an order. He thanked the citizens for the sentiments expressed by them, and proposed that they should stop their manifestations and return to their peaceful occupations. Similar calls were at the same time issued by the high officials of other cities, and suddenly all the manifestations ceased. It was touching to notice the exemplary obedience with which the citizens proportioned the height of their spiritual ardor with the insinuations of the warmly-beloved authorities. 'Soon, very soon, the streets of the Russian cities were to be filled with other crowds that were welded by a real, common enthusiasm, and against this enthusiasm not only the paternal insinuations of the authorities, but even knouts, sabres, and bullets, remained impotent.

In the show-cases of the stores were displayed cheap chromos of an amazingly stupid character. On one of them a gigantic Cossack, with a ferocious grin on his face, was mercilessly beating with his knout a tiny, frightened, howling Japanese. In another picture, which portrayed "How a Russian tar did a Jap's face mar," the blood streamed down the face of the Japanese, and his teeth poured down in a heavy rain into the blue waves. Small "monkeys" were squirming under the enormous boots of a shaggy creature with a blood-thirsty physiognomy, which personified Russia. It was as though the artist could get no other inspiration than from a drunken bout in a low saloon, where jaws cracked and teeth flew all about. Meanwhile patriotic newspapers and periodicals wrote of the deeply national and deeply Christian character of the war, of the mighty incipient struggle of George the Victor with the Dragon.

And Japanese victories followed upon victories. One after another our ironclads were smashed, and the Japanese proceeded farther and farther into Korea. Makárov and Kuropátkin, taking with them mountains of consecrated icons, had left for the Far East. Kuropátkin pronounced his famous "Patience, patience, and patience." At the end of March the blindly-brave Makárov, deftly baited by Admiral Togo, went down with the "Petropávlovsk." The Japanese crossed the river Yalu. The news of their landing at Bitszyvo flashed across the country like a streak of lightning. Port Arthur was cut off.

It appeared that we were attacked not by funny crowds of contemptible "monkeys," but by well-organized armies of stern warriors who were insensately brave and who were seized by a great spiritual ardor. Their firmness of character and power of organization inspired admiration. In interims between the arrival of news of great Japanese victories, the despatches

announced some spirited scouting expeditions of Captain K. or Lieutenant U., who had bravely cut down a Japanese guard of a dozen men or so. But this did not help to balance the bad impression. Confidence was falling more and more.

A newspaper boy walked down the street, and some artisans were sitting in front of the gate.

"The latest despatches from the theatre of war! We have beaten the Japs!"

"All right. Get a move on you! I guess they have found a drunken Jap somewhere in the gutter and have licked him. We're on to it!"

The battles were becoming more frequent and more bloody. A sanguinary mist was covering distant Manchuria. Explosions, rains of fire from the cannon, covered pits, and barbed-wire entanglements—corpses, corpses, corpses—from a thousand miles away there seemed to pass through the pages of the newspapers the odor of lacerated and singed human flesh, the phantom of some gigantic, unheard-of slaughter.

In April I left Moscow for the city of N. and departed thence into the country. Everywhere they eagerly read the newspapers and asked for the latest news. The peasants said in sadness: "Now they are going to ask for bigger taxes!"

At the end of April our Government announced a mobilization. There had been dim references to it before, and it had been expected for three weeks; but everything was kept a great secret. Suddenly the Government was struck as if by a hurricane. They drafted the men in the villages right from the fields and from the ploughs. In the towns the police rang the bell in private apartments in the dead of night, handed summonses to the recruits, and ordered them to make their appearance in the wards without delay. At the house of a friend of mine, an engineer, they drafted all the

servants, the lackey, the coachman, and the cook. He himself happened to be away on leave of absence. The police broke open his desk, got from it the passports of the recruits, and carried them all off.

There was something unfeelingly ferocious in this incomprehensible haste. They tore men away from the midst of their business, without giving them a chance to settle or liquidate their affairs. Men were carried off, and all that there was left after them were senselessly-destroyed households and ruined welfare.

The next morning I happened to be in the office of the Military Council. I had to report my country address in case of being called with the reserve. In the large yard of the office, along the fences, stood carts with horses, and in the carts and on the ground sat women, children, and old men. A large crowd of peasants was standing around the porch of the office. A soldier at the door kept driving the peasants away. He shouted angrily:

"Didn't I tell you to come Monday? Get away! Move along!"

"What do you mean by Monday? You took us, you drove us, you told us to get here at once."

"All right. So come on Monday!"

"On Monday!" The peasants walked off, swinging their arms. "They raised us in the night, they took us without saying a word, they didn't give us a chance to straighten out matters, they drove us here for a distance of thirty versts, and now they tell us 'Come Monday!' And it is only Saturday to-day!"

"Of course, it would have been more convenient for us to come on Monday. But where are we to stay now until Monday?"

Weeping and lamentation filled the whole city. Here and there brief dramas were enacted. One recruit from a factory had a sickly wife and five children. When the call to the army came, the excitement and sorrow

caused his wife paralysis of the heart, and she died at once. Her husband took a glance at the dead body and at his children, and went into the barn and hanged himself.

Another recruit, a widower with three children, wept and cried in the Council room:

"What shall I do with my children? Instruct me what to do! They will all die from starvation without me!"

He acted like a madman, shouted, and shook his fists in the air. Then he suddenly grew silent, went home, killed his children with an axe, and came back.

"Now take me. I've attended to my business."

He was arrested.

The despatches from the theatre of the war again and again brought the news of great Japanese victories, and of clever scouting exploits of Ensign Ivánov, or Cornet Petróv. The newspapers said that the Japanese victories on the sea were not at all remarkable, because the Japanese were born sailors, but that now, since the war was transferred to the land, things would go quite differently. We were informed that the Japanese were out of money and men, and that sixteen-year old boys and old men were being called to the colors. Kuropátkin calmly and austere announced that peace would be made only at Tokio.

In May, before the army corps was sent to the Far East, the reservists received a week's leave of absence. I was just driving from the railway station to the village as they were returning to the city. It was a grey, misty, rainless evening. Soldiers were walking and driving along the road to the station. It was unusual to see these grown-up, bearded peasants in military cloaks. Some were drunk and shouted songs; others were sober, and trudged along gloomily and sadly. The women howled. A stocky soldier with a shaggy beard and firmly-set lips looked at me. He said:

"Give me your blessing for the Far East?"

I had a strange sensation, as though it were the voice of one who was on his way to his execution.

Aleksyéy Sofronýchev, a plasterer from our village, drove by in a cart. His cloak hung like a bag on his narrow, stooping shoulders, and his eyes looked immovably at one point. His silent wife, with tearful eyes, held the reins.

It was getting dark. The sky was overcast, the fields looked gloomy. And in the twilight the sad figures of the fated ones moved on like grey phantoms.

In the beginning of June I received in the country a despatch demanding my immediate appearance at military headquarters.

There I was told that I was called for active service and must report in the city of S. at the Staff Office of the Division of Infantry. According to law, I was given two days to arrange my domestic affairs and three days to get my uniform. Everything was being done in haste, the uniform was being made, and all kinds of things were being bought. Nobody knew how the uniform was to be made, what was to be bought, or how many things one could take along. It was a difficult matter to get one's complete equipment in five days. It was necessary to hurry the tailors and to pay them three-fold for day and night work. In spite of it all, the uniform was a day late, and I hurried on the first train to S.

I arrived at night. All the hotels were full of newly-drafted officers and surgeons, and I drove about town for a long while before I found an expensive and dirty room in an ill-furnished lodging-house in the outskirts of the town.

In the morning I went to the Staff of the Division. I felt awkward in the military uniform, and I felt awkward, too, because the soldiers and policemen whom I



passed saluted me. My legs got constantly entangled with the sabre which dangled at my side.

The long, low-studded rooms of the Staff were filled with tables, at which officers, surgeons, and soldier-clerks sat and wrote. I was directed to the Assistant Division Surgeon.

"What is your name?"

I gave it to him.

"You are not mentioned here in the mobilization plan," he replied in surprise.

"I know nothing about it. I was summoned here to S. with the order to appear at the office of the Infantry Division. Here is the paper."

The Assistant Division Surgeon looked through the paper and shrugged his shoulders. He went away, had a talk with another surgeon, and both rummaged through a lot of documents.

"There is positively no reference to you in our documents," he announced to me.

"So I may return home?" I asked smilingly.

"Just wait a little. I'll take another look."

I waited. There were some other surgeons who had been called from the reserve, some in civilian clothes, others, like me, in brand new uniforms with shining shoulder-straps. We made each other's acquaintance. They told me of the incredible confusion which reigned in the office. Nobody knew what he was about, and nobody could find anything out from his neighbor.

"Arise!" A sonorous voice commandingly passed through the room.

Everybody arose, hurriedly arranging his clothes. An old, spectacled general sauntered into the room, exclaiming jestingly:

"I wish you good health!"

A friendly din met his salutation. The general passed into the next room.

The assistant approached me.

"Well, at last we have found it. In the ambulance corps of the field hospital there is a vacancy caused by a junior surgeon whom the Military Council has declared to be unfit for service. You are to take his place. By the way, here is your chief surgeon. Introduce yourself to him."

A small, spare old man hurriedly entered the room. His uniform was shabby, and his shoulder-straps, indicating his rank of Collegiate Councillor, were tarnished. I walked up to him and introduced myself. I asked him where I was to go, and what I was to do.

"What are you to do? Why, nothing. Just leave your address in the Office, that's all."

I left the Staff with a strange feeling. The stern and categorical rules of the summons demanded that I should leave for the appointed place within five days; I left my personal affairs in an unfinished condition; I flew thither as to a conflagration—and here I saw that nobody needed me, that there was no sense in being in a hurry. I might have arrived a week or two later, and no one would even have noticed it.

Day after day passed without work. Our Corps did not leave for the Far East until two months later. We, the surgeons, improved our knowledge of surgery by visiting the local hospital, being present at operations, and working over dead bodies.

Among my companions who had been called from the reserve, there were specialists in all imaginable departments. There were among them alienists, hygienists, children's physicians, *accoucheurs*. We were scattered over hospitals, over ambulances, over armies, on the basis of the mobilization records, and not at all on the basis of our specialties. There were some physicians who had long ago given up practice. One of them had entered the service of the Excise Office eight years before, immediately after graduating from the uni-

versity, and had never in all his life written a single prescription.

There was another physician, a grey-haired man, rather bald, who was nearly sixty years old. How could such an old man have been summoned to the army? This is the way it happened. After graduating as a physician, a man who is subject to military duty is counted in the reserve for the next eighteen years, independently of his wish, of course, whether he likes it or not. It would seem that after eighteen years the physician would be free. Not at all. He must then make known his desire to leave the reserve, otherwise he is not stricken from the records, and continues to be counted in the voluntary reserves. Our old physician had accomplished the term of the reserve some twelve years ago, but like a typical Russian he forgot to give notice of the end of his service, and so he quite unexpectedly appeared in the "voluntary reserves." Now, since the war had been declared, matters were settled, and he could not leave the reserve. So the old man was called, and he had to go to the war.

I was appointed to the field hospital. In war time every division has two such hospitals. In the hospital there is one chief surgeon, one senior assistant surgeon, and three junior assistants. The lower positions were taken by physicians who had been called from the reserve, the higher by military surgeons.

I seldom saw our chief surgeon, Dr. Davýdov. He was busy organizing the movable hospital; besides, he had an extensive practice in the city, and was constantly rushing somewhere. At the Staff I made the acquaintance of the chief surgeon of the second hospital of our division, Dr. Mútin. Previous to the mobilization he had been the junior surgeon of the local regiment. He was still living with his wife in the regimental camp. I passed an evening with him, and met there the junior surgeons of his hospital. They

had all made each other's acquaintance, and a relationship of comradeship had established itself between them and Mútin. They were a jolly, happy lot. I was sorry for not having been appointed to their hospital, and I envied them.

A few days later a despatch suddenly came from Moscow to the Staff of the Division. Dr. Mútin was ordered to turn over his hospital to a Dr. Sultánov, and himself immediately to repair to Harbin, in order to organize a reserve hospital there. The appointment was unexpected and incomprehensible; Mútin had already formed his hospital here, and had everything in running order—and suddenly this transfer. Of course, there was nothing to do but submit. Mútin consoled himself with the thought that now he would not have to go to the Far East with the echelon, and that, consequently, he would get travelling expenses, about a thousand rubles. But a few days later there came a new telegram. Mútin was not to go to Harbin; he was again appointed junior surgeon of his regiment, which he was to accompany to the Far East. Upon arrival at Harbin with the echelon, he was to organize a reserve hospital. Thus he lost the chance for the travelling expenses.

It was a cruel and undeserved affront. Mútin was provoked and agitated. He said that after such an insult in the service there was nothing left for him to do but to send a bullet through his brain. He took a leave of absence, and went to Moscow to get justice. He had some connections there, but he did not succeed in his quest. He was given to understand in Moscow that a mighty person had a hand in the matter and that nothing could be done against him.

Mútin returned to his shattered nest, the regimental ward, and a few days later there arrived from Moscow his successor in the hospital, Dr. Sultánov. He was a tall gentleman, in the forties, with a Van Dyke beard

and greyish hair, and with a clever, smiling face. He knew how to start a conversation and to talk glibly; he became everywhere the centre of attention, and in a nonchalant, serious voice dropped witticisms which made everybody laugh. Sultánov stayed in town a few days, and then went back to Moscow. He left all the responsibility for the further arrangement of the hospital in the hands of the senior assistant.

Soon it became known that of the four Sisters of Mercy who had been invited to the hospital from the local Red Cross Society, only one was left. Dr. Sultánov announced that he would substitute the other three himself. There were rumors that Sultánov was a great friend of the commander of our corps, and that certain Moscow ladies, good friends of the commander of the corps, were going to the theatre of war, and to his hospital, in the capacity of Sisters of Mercy.

The town was full of soldiers. The red lapels of the generals, the gold and silver lace of the officers, and the yellow and cinnamon blouses of the lower ranks gleamed everywhere. The men were constantly assuming attitudes and shamming to each other. Everything looked strange and queer.

On my uniform there were silver buttons, and on my shoulders tinsel silver straps. On the basis of these, every soldier was obliged to draw himself up respectfully in front of me and to use antiquated phrases, such as "Precisely so, sir," "By no means, sir," "I will try, sir." On the same basis I was obliged to evince a deep respect for every old man if his cloak had a red lining and a red stripe ran down his trousers.

I learned that I had no right to smoke in the presence of a general, nor to sit down without his permission. I learned that any general could arbitrarily put me under arrest for a month, while my chief surgeon might lock me up for a week. And all this would hap-

pen without any right of appeal, even without any right on my part to ask for an explanation of my arrest. I myself might exercise the same power over the lower ranks under my command. A certain novel atmosphere was created, and it was perceptible that men were getting drunk from their power over other men, and that their souls were tuned anew in a manner which only provoked smiles.

This intoxicating atmosphere acted in a curious way upon the feeble head of one of the physicians who had been called from the reserve. This was Dr. Vaslev, that same senior surgeon to whom Sultánov, upon departing for Moscow, turned over the task of organizing the hospital. Psychically unbalanced, painfully puffed-up by egotism, Vaslev was simply crazed by the power and respect with which he suddenly found himself surrounded.

One day he entered the office of his hospital. When the chief surgeon, who enjoyed the privileges of a district commander, entered the office, the supervising officer generally gave the command to the sitting clerks, "Arise!" When Vaslev entered, the supervisor failed to do this.

Vaslev frowned, called the supervisor to one side, and sternly asked him why he had not given the command to the clerks to arise. The supervisor shrugged his shoulders.

"This is merely a manifestation of accepted politeness which I may show you, if I am so inclined, or which I may omit."

"Pardon me. So long as I perform the duties of the chief surgeon, you are obliged to do it by law."

"I know no such law."

"Well, take the trouble to find out the law, and meanwhile you will go under arrest for two days."

The officer turned to the Commander of the Division and told him the affair. Dr. Vaslev was called in.

The general, the commander of his staff, and two staff officers took up the affair, and decided that the supervisor was obliged to shout, "Arise!" He was freed from arrest, but he was transferred from the hospital to the line.

When the supervisor had left, the Division Commander said to Dr. Vasilev:

"You see, I am a general. I have served nearly forty years, my hair has grown grey in service, and up to the present time I have never put an officer under arrest. You have barely entered military service, and have temporarily, for a few days, had authority delegated to you, and you have already made haste to make use of this power to its fullest extent."

In times of peace our corps did not exist. During mobilization it was evolved out of one brigade and consisted almost exclusively of reservists. The soldiers had forgotten discipline and were oppressed by cares for their families. Many of them did not even know how to handle the rifles of the new pattern. They were going to the war, while the youthful, fresh armies, consisting of soldiers of the line, remained in Russia. It was rumored that Minister of War Sakhárov was quite hostile to Kuropátkin, and was purposely sending the very worst regiments to the Far East in order to hurt his reputation. The rumors were persistent, and in his conversations with the reporters Sakhárov was obliged to justify himself vehemently for his incomprehensible manner of action.

At the Staff, I made the acquaintance of the local Division Surgeon. He was about to retire on account of illness, and was just serving out his last days. He was a very dear and kind-hearted old man, a pitiful object whom life had treated cruelly. Out of curiosity I went with him to the local military lazaretto to attend the sitting of the Commission which examined the sol-

diers who reported themselves as sick. They had mobilized even the reservists of the very earliest classes: before our eyes passed an endless row of rheumatics, emphysematics, toothless men, men afflicted with varicose veins. The chairman of the Commission, a fine major of cavalry, wrinkled his brow and complained that there were too many "protesters." I, on the contrary, marvelled at the fact that the presiding surgeons were not "protesting" against so many who were obviously disabled. At the end of the meeting one of the surgeons of the Commission turned to my friend:

"While you were away, we declared a man unfit for service. Take a look at him, and see whether we ought to free him. It is a bad case of varicocele."

The soldier was brought in.

"Take off your trousers!" the Division Surgeon said in a peculiar, suspicious voice. "Oh! That's it! Nonsense! No, no, we can't free him!"

"Your Excellency, I can't walk at all," the soldier said in a gruff way.

The old physician flew up in a rage.

"You're a liar! You are malingering! You can walk nicely! My good fellow, I have a worse case of it than you! That's all nonsense, indeed!" He turned to my friend. "The most of them are like that. Scoundrel! Son of a b——!"

The soldier put on his clothes, looking superciliously and with malice at the Division Surgeon. After having dressed, he slowly walked towards the door with a shambling gait.

"Walk decently!" yelled the old surgeon, furiously stamping his feet. "Don't sprawl that way! Walk straight! My friend, you can't bamboozle me!"

They exchanged glances full of hate. The soldier walked out. . . .



In the regiments the senior military surgeons kept telling the junior surgeons who had been summoned from the reserves:

"You are unacquainted with the conditions of military service. Treat the soldiers sternly, and keep in mind that they are unusual patients. They are all remarkable cheats and malingerers."

One soldier came to the senior regimental surgeon complaining of a pain in his feet, which made it hard for him to walk. There were no external symptoms, and the surgeon scolded the soldier and drove him away. The junior regimental surgeon followed after the soldier, examined him carefully, and found a typical pronounced case of flat instep. The soldier was discharged. A few days later the same junior surgeon was present as the surgeon of the day during target practice. The soldiers were returning home, and one fell very much behind, and limped heavily on one foot. The surgeon asked him what the matter was.

"I have a pain in my legs. Only, it is an internal trouble. You can't see anything from without," the soldier answered in a reserved and gloomy way.

The surgeon made an investigation. There turned out to be a complete absence of knee-jerk reflexes. Naturally, the soldier was discharged.

So these were the scoundrels. And they were discharged only because the young surgeon was "unacquainted with the conditions of military service."

It goes without saying, it was a painful sensation to send all this ailing, crippled mass of old men to war. Besides, it really did not pay to receive them, for, after they had travelled seven thousand versts to the Far East, they were knocked out after the first forced march. They filled the hospitals, the étapes, and the companies of the disabled, and a few months later these perfectly useless men, who had cost a lot of money to the government, were returned to Russia.

All this time the town was living in terror and agitation. Noisy crowds of newly-drafted soldiers walked about the town, robbing passers-by, and demolishing the saloons of the government monopoly. They said, "Let them take us to court! We have got to die anyway!" In the evening the soldiers attacked near the camp fifty women who were returning from the brick-yards, and violated them. The rumor spread in the market-place that the reservists were planning a great riot.

From the East there kept coming news of great Japanese victories and of clever scouting exploits of Russian captains and lieutenants. The newspapers said that the Japanese victories in the mountainous regions were not surprising, for they were born mountaineers. But the war was now passing over to the plains, where we could deploy our cavalry, and things would go quite differently. We were informed that the Japanese were entirely out of money and men, and that the depleted ranks of soldiers were being filled with fourteen-year old boys and decrepit old men. Kuropátkin, who was carrying out his totally incomprehensible plan, was retreating to the powerfully fortified Liao-yang. The military observers wrote, "The bow is bent, the string is tautly-drawn, and soon the death-dealing arrow will fly, with terrible strength, into the very heart of the enemy."

Our officers looked cheerfully into the future. They said that a turning-point in the war was coming, that Russian victory was certain, and that our corps would hardly have to be in action. We were needed there only for our forty thousand bayonets, at the signing of the treaty of peace.

In the beginning of August the echelons of our corps went to the Far East. Just before the departure an officer shot himself in a hotel. A soldier went to the bake-shop in the Old Market and bought a pound of

temse-bread. He asked for a knife with which to cut the loaf, and with it cut his throat. Another soldier shot himself near the camp with a rifle. I once went to the railroad station as an echelon was departing. There was a big crowd of people there, among them representatives of the city. The Division Commander was haranguing the departing soldiers, wishing them Godspeed. He said that first of all we must revere God, that we had begun the war with God's aid, and that we should finish it with His aid. The bell rang, and people were exchanging farewells. The air was filled with the weeping and lamentations of the women; drunken soldiers took their places in the cars, and the public showered money, soap and cigarettes on the departing soldiers. Near a car a junior sergeant was bidding his wife good-bye, and weeping like a child. His mustachioed, sunburnt face was drenched with tears, and his lips twitched and quivered with grief. His wife, too, was sunburnt, and her distorted face showed prominent cheek-bones. In her arms was a suckling babe in a cap made from bright-colored rags. The woman swayed with her sobbing, and the infant in her arms shook like a leaf in the wind. The husband sobbed and kissed the distorted face of the woman, kissed her lips and her eyes, while the babe swayed to and fro. It was strange to see a man sobbing so out of love for such an ugly woman; and tears came to the eyes and a lump rose in the throat from hearing the lamentations and explosive sobs all about. The eyes hung eagerly upon the cars filled with men; how many of them will return? How many of them will lie as corpses in the distant, blood-drenched fields?

"Well, take your seats! Get into the cars!" the sergeants shouted, hurrying the soldiers. They lifted the junior sergeant by his arms into the car. He groaned and struggled to reach the sobbing woman with the babe swaying in her arms.

"How can a soldier weep?" a sergeant-major said in a stern, reprimanding voice.

"Oh, holy mother!" plaintively resounded some women's voices.

"Step aside!" the gendarmes kept repeating, pushing the crowd away from the cars. But the crowd immediately swept back, and was again driven off by the gendarmes.

"What makes you so eager, mercenary souls? Haven't you any pity?" somebody in the crowd exclaimed indignantly.

"Pity? Of course I have!" the gendarme replied with a voice of authority. "But what are you going to do with people that kill themselves and kill others? Why, they throw themselves under the wheels. We have got to look out."

The train started. The lamentations of the women increased in intensity. The gendarmes kept pushing the crowd back. A soldier ran forward, rapidly crossed the platform, and started to hand a bottle of vodka to the departing men. Suddenly the commander shot up as though from the earth in front of the soldier. He tore the bottle out of the soldier's hands, and hit it against the flagstone. The bottle broke into atoms. A threatening murmur spread among the onlookers, and in the slowly-moving cars. The soldier flashed up with anger, and grimly bit his lips.

"You have no right to break the bottle!" he shouted at the officer.

"Wha-at?"

The commander swung back his hand and with all his strength slapped the soldier's face. Immediately an armed guard made its appearance and surrounded the soldier.

The cars moved faster and faster, and the drunken soldiers and the onlookers shouted "Hurrah!" The sergeant's ugly wife swayed, and, dropping the baby

from her arms, fell senseless to the ground. A bystander caught the child in time.

The train began to disappear in the distance. The Division Commander crossed the platform towards the arrested soldier.

"So you, my dear fellow, have taken it upon yourself to scold the officer, eh?" he said.

The soldier stood, pale, restraining as best he could the rage which agitated him.

"Your Excellency! I should have preferred that he had spilled as much of my blood as he has of the vodka. It is in vodka only that we live, Your Excellency."

The bystanders crowded about them.

"It was the officer who slapped his face. General, please inform us whether there is such a law."

The Division Commander pretended not to hear. He glanced at the soldier through his glasses and said, emphasizing his words:

"Have him court-martialled! Take him to the prison ward! Have him flogged! Take him away!"

The general walked off, repeating slowly and distinctly:

"Have him court-martialled! Take him to the prison ward! Have him flogged! Take him away!"

## CHAPTER II

### ON THE WAY

Our echelon departed.

The train stood far away from the platform, on the reserve track. Soldiers, peasants, artisans and women crowded around the cars. For the past two weeks the monopoly saloons had been closed, but most of the soldiers were drunk. Through the oppressive, sad weeping of the women were borne the lively tunes of the harmonica and jests and laughter. Leaning with his back towards the base of the electric lamp sat a noseless peasant in a torn gaberdine, munching a piece of bread.

Our supervisor, a lieutenant who had been summoned from the reserves, dressed in his new blouse and glittering shoulder straps, walked somewhat nervously up and down in front of the train.

"Take your places in the cars!" was heard his haughty and commanding voice.

The crowd was at once agitated. Parting greetings were exchanged. A tottering, drunken soldier pressed his lips to the lips of an old woman in a black kerchief, and kissed her passionately again and again. It was a painful sight—it looked as though he would press her teeth out. At last he tore himself away and rushed to embrace a blithely smiling, broad-bearded peasant. The melancholy lamentations of the women were borne through the air like the howling of a snowstorm. Now they sounded like broken, choking sobs; now they grew weaker, now stronger.

"Women, away from the cars!" sternly shouted the lieutenant, walking up and down beside the train.

A sandy-bearded soldier looked with sober and austere eyes out of the car and addressed the lieutenant:

"Your Honor, you have no right to drive our women away," he exclaimed harshly. "You have been given the power over us, so shout at us; but don't touch our women."

"That's so. You have no power over the women," mumbled other voices.

The supervisor blushed, but pretended that he did not hear, and said in a softer voice:

"Close the doors. The train will soon start."

The conductor's whistle was heard, the train jarred, and began to move.

"Hurrah!" came the thundering sounds from the cars and from the bystanders.

Amidst the sobbing, helplessly swaying women who were supported by the men, suddenly flashed the noseless face of the peasant in the torn gaberdine. From his bloodshot eyes tears streamed down over his mutilated countenance, and his lips twitched.

"Hurrah!" was thundered through the air, while the rumble of the wheels grew louder and louder. In the front car a soldier chorus started to sing inharmoniously the Lord's Prayer. Along the roadbed, at some distance from the train, strutted the broad-bearded peasant with a blissful, flushed face. He swung his arms, and opening wide his dark red mouth, shouted "Hurrah!"

Just then groups of railway workers in blue blouses came towards the train from their shops.

"Good fellows, may you return in good health!" shouted one. Another threw his cap high into the air.

"Hurrah!" was the answer from the cars.

The train rumbled and increased its speed. A

drunken soldier leaned to his waist out of the high, small window of the freight car and continued shouting "Hurrah!" His open-mouthed profile stood out dark against the background of the blue heavens. Men and buildings receded. He swung his cap to the telegraph poles and continued shouting "Hurrah!"

The supervisor entered our compartment. He was sad and agitated.

"Have you heard this story? Officers just told me at the station that soldiers yesterday killed Colonel Lukashov. They were drunk and started shooting from the cars at a herd that was passing by. He tried to stop them, and so they killed him."

"I heard it differently," I retorted. "He treated the soldiers very brutally and they promised before departing that they would kill him on the way."

"Yes!" The supervisor was silent for a moment, and looked with wide-open eyes in front of him. "Yes, one has to be more careful with them!"

In the cars of the common soldiers they kept drinking without cessation. Nobody knew how or where the soldiers got the vodka. But they had all they wanted. Day and night, songs, drunken conversations, and laughter could be heard in the cars. Whenever the train left a station the soldiers cheered in a confused and feeble manner, and the bystanders, who had become accustomed to the travelling echelons, looked at them in silence and with indifference.

The same feeble effort could be observed in the merriment of the soldiers. They meant to be as jolly as possible and to have a continuous good time; but they were not successful. They were drunk, but none the less they felt lonely. Corporal Súchkov, ex-shoemaker, danced with abandon at every stop, as though he were performing a duty. The soldiers crowded around him.

Lean and lank Súchkov, with his chintz shirt tucked



into his trousers, clapped his hands, bent his knees, and danced to the sound of the harmonica. His motions were slow and provokingly sluggish, his body swayed limply as though it were without bones, and his legs dangled lazily forward. Then he caught the tip of his boot in his hand and continued dancing on one foot. His body still swayed and strangely balanced on one leg, in spite of his beastly intoxication. Then he suddenly leaped up and started the steps of a jig; again his dangling legs flew forward, and his apparently boneless body swayed with the same provoking, sluggish movements.

Laughter was heard all around.

"Can't you step it more lively, Uncle?"

"Say, friend, go behind the gate, have a good cry, and then come back and dance!"

"He's got just one joint, and that's all he shows!" said the surgeon's assistant of the company, throwing up his hands and walking away.

But Súchkov himself was getting dissatisfied with the sluggishness of his motions, which kept him from dancing jauntily. He suddenly stopped, beat the floor with his foot, and furiously struck his breast with his fist.

"Well, strike your breast once more! There is a fine hollow sound in it!" the sergeant-major said, laughing.

"Stop your dancing! Leave some for to-morrow!" some soldiers exclaimed sternly, as they crawled back into the cars.

At times, for no particular reason, they would start dancing madly at some small station. The pavement resounded with the clatter of their heels, the mighty bodies swayed, squatted, bounced up like balls, and insanely jolly shouts and squeaks were borne over the sunburnt steppes.

Our Corps Commander caught up with us on the

Samára-Zlatoust Road. He was travelling in a special car of the express train. Everything was in a flutter. The pale supervisor in agitation drew up the company in front of the train, "just as they were," as the Corps Commander had ordered. The most intoxicated soldiers were put away in the back cars.

The general crossed the rails to the fourth track, where our echelon stood, and reviewed the soldiers standing in line. He put a few questions to some of them. They answered coherently, but tried not to breathe upon the general. He went back silently.

Alas, not far from the car of the Corps Commander, amidst a crowd of onlookers, Súchkov was dancing on the platform. He was dancing and urging on a coquettish, buxom chambermaid to dance with him.

"What do you want before you will dance? Roast sausage?"

The chambermaid laughed and disappeared in the crowd. Súchkov rushed after her.

"You vixen, look out! I've got an eye on you!"

The supervisor nearly fainted.

"Call him away!" he hissed in anger to the other soldiers.

The soldiers grabbed Súchkov under the arms and carried him off. Súchkov cursed, yelled, and fought. The general and the Staff Commander silently threw side glances at him.

A minute later the chief surgeon stood at attention before the Corps Commander, with his hand to his cap. The general angrily said something to him, and went back with the Staff Commander to his car.

The Staff Commander came back. Striking his lacquered boot with an elegant riding-crop, he turned to the chief surgeon and the supervisor.

"His Excellency sternly reprimands you. We have come past many an echelon,—they presented themselves

in excellent order. But with you the whole company is drunk."

"Colonel, we can't do anything with them."

"You had better give them some religious tracts to read."

"It doesn't do any good. They read them and go on drinking."

"Well, then—" the colonel swished his crop through the air emphatically, and said: "Try it! It helps a lot!"

This conversation took place not two weeks later than the issue of the imperial manifesto for the complete abolition of corporal punishment.

We crossed the Urals. All about us were the steppes. The echelons crept slowly, one after the other, and there were endless stops at the stations. We did not make more than one hundred and fifty to two hundred versts in twenty-four hours.

The same drunkenness was present in all the echelons. The soldiers rioted and robbed the railway lunch-counters and villages. There was little discipline, and it was no easy matter to keep that up. The discipline was all based on fear, but the men knew that they were going to their death, so how could they be frightened? Death would come anyway, and any other punishment would be better than death. Here is the kind of scene that took place.

The commander of the echelon walks over to the soldiers who are lined up in front of the train. On the flank stands a sergeant, smoking a cigarette.

"What is this? You are a sergeant, and you do not know that smoking is not permitted in the line!"

"Why not? Tut, tut, why may I not smoke?" the sergeant calmly asks, puffing at his cigarette. And it is obvious that what he is after is to be court-martialled.

In our car, life went on monotonously and evenly.

We four junior surgeons were travelling in adjoining compartments. The four were the senior assistant surgeon Grechikhin, and the junior assistants, Selyukóv, Shántser, and I. They were all a fine lot of men, and we became intimately acquainted. We read, discussed, and played chess.

Occasionally Chief Surgeon Davýdov came to us from his separate compartment. He told us a great deal about the conditions of service of an army surgeon, and about the disorders reigning in the Department of War. He told us of his conflicts with the authorities, and of his noble and independent attitudes in these conflicts. In his stories one felt boastfulness and a desire to fall in with our views. He had little intelligence, his jokes were cynical, and his opinions were common and banal.

The supervisor, the lieutenant from the reserve, was everywhere at Davýdov's heels. Before the mobilization he had served as a Zémstvo commander. It was rumored that, thanks to influential protection, he managed to escape the line, and to be appointed as supervisor of the hospital. He was a well-formed, fine-looking man of about thirty years of age. He was dull of intellect, arrogant, conceited, and hopelessly lazy and inefficient. His relations with the chief surgeon were excellent. He looked gloomily and sadly at the future.

"I know I shall not return from the war. I drink an awful lot of water, and the water is very bad, so I am sure I shall catch typhoid fever or dysentery. Anyway, a Hung-hutz bullet will fetch me. I do not figure on getting home alive."

With us travelled an apothecary, a priest, two special officials, and four Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters were simple, uneducated girls. They mispronounced words, felt offended at our harmless jokes, and confusedly laughed at the ambiguous jests of the chief surgeon and the supervisor.

At the long stops we were overtaken by the echelon in which the second hospital of our Division was travelling. From the car came handsome Dr. Sultánov, with his magnificent, languid gait, and upon his arm was a tall, elegantly-dressed lady. This, everybody said, was his niece. And the other Sisters were also dressed very fashionably and spoke French, and the officers of the Staff were always hanging around them.

Sultánov was not much interested in his hospital. His men and horses went hungry. One morning early, during a stop, our chief surgeon drove to town, where he bought hay and oats. The provender was brought and deposited on a platform between our echelon and that of Sultánov. Sultánov, who had just awakened, looked out of the window. Davýdov walked up and down the platform, busy with his thoughts. Sultánov triumphantly pointed to the provender.

"So here I have my oats already," he said.

"Ye-es," Davýdov replied, ironically.

"You see? And the hay, too."

"And the hay? Superb! Only I will have all this put at once into our cars."

"How so?"

"Just so, because it is I who bought it."

"Oh, and I thought it was my supervisor." Sultánov yawned lazily, and turned to his niece who stood nearby: "Well, had we not better go to the station to get some coffee?"

Hundreds on hundreds of versts. The country is as flat as a table, and only occasionally does one see small thickets. There are hardly any ploughed fields—nothing but meadows. Here and there one may see the green stubble of a newly-mowed clearing, and the dark hayricks and mows. Most of the meadows have not been mown. The brown, scorched grass waves with the wind, and the seeds rattle in the dry pods. The

chief of a local peasant commune travelled for a short distance with our echelon. He told us that there were no hands to be had, that all the adult men, including the reservists, had been summoned to the war. The meadows were being ruined, the fields remained uncultivated.

One evening, somewhere in the neighborhood of Káinsk, our train suddenly began to give alarm whistles, and abruptly stopped. An orderly came running in, telling us excitedly that we had just escaped colliding with another train. Similar alarms repeated themselves frequently. The railway hands were over-tired and they were not permitted to leave under threat of court-martial. The cars were old and worn-out; now an axle got overheated, now the cars broke loose from one another, now the train overshot the stop.

We left the car. In front of our train could be seen another. The engines stood glaring at each other with their round lights, like two enemies who have met on a narrow path. At both sides of the track lay clearings covered with tufted reed-grass. In the distance, amidst some shrubs, could be seen the dark hay-ricks. The other train began to back up. Our train, too, started to whistle. Suddenly I saw a number of our soldiers running out from the bushes and across the clearing, with enormous bundles of hay in their arms.

"Oh, there, throw away the hay," I shouted.

They continued to run towards the train. From the cars of the soldiers were heard shouts of encouragement.

"Not at all! So long as they have reached the train, the hay is ours!"

The chief surgeon and the supervisor looked with curiosity out of the car-window.

"Throw away the hay at once! Do you hear?" I yelled furiously.

The soldiers threw away their armfuls on the ground

and, growling in dissatisfaction, crawled into the moving train. I entered the car, greatly provoked.

"The devil take it! You are beginning to loot right here, among your own people! And without any ceremony, in the presence of everybody!"

"But the hay hasn't any value here. It is going to rot in the stacks anyway," the chief surgeon answered lazily.

I was amazed.

"I beg your pardon. I can't understand it. You yourself heard only yesterday what the chief of the village commune said. On the contrary, hay is very expensive here, and there is nobody to do the mowing. The commissariat department is paying forty kopeks a pud. Above all, this is looting, and must not be admitted in principle."

"All right. Of course. Nobody denies it," the chief surgeon hastened to reply.

The conversation left a strange impression on me. I had expected that the chief surgeon and the supervisor would be provoked, that they would collect a detachment, and would issue an emphatic command to stop looting. But they looked with the deepest unconcern upon what had taken place. The orderly, who had listened to our conversation, remarked with a reserved smile:

"For whom are the soldiers taking this hay? For the horses. This is a gain for the government, they don't have to pay for it."

Then suddenly what had surprised me three days ago became clear to me: the chief surgeon had, at a small station, bought up a thousand puds of oats at an exceedingly low price. He returned to the car, satisfied with himself, and beaming.

"I have just bought some oats at forty-five kopeks," he informed us, triumphantly.

I wondered whether it was really true that he re-

joiced at having saved some hundreds of rubles to the treasury. Now his enthusiasm became more comprehensible to me.

At every station the soldiers grabbed anything they could lay their hands on. Frequently I could not make out of what good it was to them. If they ran across a dog, they would seize him and place him on an open freight car amidst the carriages. A few days later the dog would run away, and the soldiers would catch another. I once took a look at such an open car. On the hay lay a red wooden bowl, a small iron kettle, two axes, a stool, and a wooden pail. All this was booty. At a siding I left the car to take a short walk. In the mowing stood a rusty iron stove. Our soldiers were suspiciously crowding about it, looking at me and smiling. I went back to my car, and they were all in a flutter. A few minutes later I came out again. The stove was gone from the mowing, the soldiers were ducking under the cars, and in one of the cars something heavy was being moved.

"They'll steal and hide away a live man!" a soldier who was sitting on the mowing said to me merrily.

One evening, at the station of Khilók, I left the train to ask a boy whether I could not buy some bread there.

"Up there on the hill lives a Jewish merchant, but he has locked himself up."

"What for?"

"He is afraid."

"What is he afraid of?"

The boy was silent. A soldier passed by with a kettle of boiling water in his hand.

"If we grab everything in day time, we shall certainly carry off the shop, together with the Jew, at night time," he explained to me as he ran on.

At the long stops our soldiers built big fires and made soups with chickens which came God only knows



whence; or they singed pigs which, they claimed, had been run over by the train.

Frequently they made their acquisitions in accordance with very sly and clever plans. At one time we made a long stop at a small station. A tall, lean, drunken Little-Russian, by the name of Kucherénko, the wit of our detachment, was acting the fool in the clearing near the train. He had thrown over himself a piece of matting, and was swaying to and fro as though drunk. A soldier laughingly pushed him into the gutter. Kucherénko rummaged about in there for a little while and then crawled back. He was bent up and was laboriously dragging a rusty iron stove-pipe.

"Chentlemen, we shall haf moosic now. Blease don't pother me," he announced, pretending to be a foreigner.

He was suddenly surrounded by soldiers and by the inhabitants of the station village. Kucherénko, with the matting on his shoulders, handled the stove-pipe as a bear handles his log. He moved his hand about the stove-pipe, with a majestic and serious look, as though he were turning the crank of an organ, and he sang out in a hoarse voice:

"Why do you, mad one, oho, ohay!"

Kucherénko represented a broken-down hurdy-gurdy so well that everybody around him, the villagers, the soldiers, and we, burst into guffaws. He took off his cap and passed it around.

"Chentlemen, blease gif someding to a boor Italian moosician for his labors."

Warrant-officer Smetánnikov handed him a rock. Kucherénko perplexedly shook his head over the rock and whirled it at Smetánnikov, who was running away.

"Get to your cars!" the command was heard. The engine whistled, and the soldiers rushed headlong back to the cars.

At the next stop they cooked soup over an open fire. Chickens and ducks were thick in the kettle. Two of our Sisters walked up to the fire.

"Sisters, won't you have some chicken?" the soldiers asked.

"Where did you get chickens from?"

The soldiers laughed slyly.

"That's what they gave to the musician for his labor."

It turned out that while Kucherénko had distracted the attention of the villagers, other soldiers had cleared the barn-yards of the fowls. The Sisters reproached them and told them that it was not right to steal.

"What is there wrong about it? We are in the Tsar's service, and we have got to eat. We haven't had any warm food for three days, and you can't buy anything at the stations, because the bread has not been baked. Are we to die of starvation?"

"We didn't do much," remarked another. "But look at those from K. They have swiped two whole cows."

"Just think of it. Let us say that you have a cow at home, and suddenly Orthodox people take her away. Wouldn't that be a shame? It's exactly the same here. It may be the peasant's last cow that they have stolen, and he is killing himself with grief."

"Well?" The soldier swung his arms. "Don't our people cry? They are crying everywhere."

As we approached Krasnoyársk, news of the Liao-yang battle began to reach us. At first, as usual, the despatches announced an expected victory, the retreat of the Japs, the capture of guns. Then came despatches with dim, ill-omened hints, and finally, the usual announcement of a retreat "in good order." The men eagerly grabbed the newspapers and scanned the despatches; it was clear that we were beaten in this battle also, that impregnable Liao-yang had been taken, that

"the mortiferous arrow" with "the tautly-drawn string" had impotently fallen to the ground, and that we were in flight again.

A gloomy and oppressive spirit penetrated the echelons.

One evening we sat in the small hall of an insignificant station and ate miserable soup that had been heated up a dozen times or more. A number of echelons happened to come together here, and the hall was filled with officers. In front of us sat a tall second-captain with sunken cheeks, and near him a taciturn lieutenant-colonel.

The second-captain shouted at the top of his voice:

"The Japanese officers have given up their pay and keep, and are sharing their rations with the soldiers. The Minister of Public Instruction has entered the service as a private, in order to serve his country. No one considers his life, every one is ready to give it up for his country. Why? Because they have an idea. Because they know what they are fighting for. And they are all educated, and all the soldiers can read and write. Every soldier has a compass and a plan, and can give an intelligent account of the task which he is set to do. From the Marshal to the lowest private, all are filled with the one idea of victory over the enemy. And so, too, thinks the commissariat."

The second-captain talked of what everybody knew from the newspapers, but he talked as though he had specially studied it, while nobody around him knew anything about it. An inexpressibly stout, drunken captain was making a disturbance near the counter, and quarrelling about something with the keeper of the refreshment room.

"And how is it with us?" continued the second-captain. "Who of us knows what the war is for? Who of us is enthusiastic? All we talk about is travelling expenses. We are driven like sheep. Our generals do

nothing but quarrel with each other. Our commissary officers steal. Look at the boots of our soldiers—in two months they'll be worn to shreds. And yet these boots have been accepted by twenty-five commissions."

"They could not have rejected them," our chief surgeon said in support of his statement. "The leather was neither acid nor rotten."

"Yes, and then the soles drop off after the first rain. Tell me, can such soldiers be victorious, or not?"

He talked loudly and everybody listened to him sympathetically. Our supervisor looked timidly about him. He felt uncomfortable amidst these bold and loud remarks, and he retorted that it was all a question of how the boots were made, for he himself had seen the leather of the commissariat and could bear witness to it that it was excellent.

"As you wish, gentlemen," the supervisor announced, in his full, self-confident voice. "It isn't at all a question of boots, but of the military spirit. If the spirit is all right, we can beat the enemy no matter what boots we have on."

"If you are barefoot and have sores on your legs, you won't beat anybody," retorted the second-captain.

"But is the spirit all right?" the lieutenant-colonel asked curiously.

"It is our own fault if it isn't all right," the supervisor answered warmly. "We didn't know how to educate the soldiers. You see, they need an idea; I declare, an idea! The soldiers, and we, too, are to be guided by military duty and not by ideas. It is not a soldier's business to talk of ideas; his business is to go silently to death."

The fat captain, who had been making the disturbance at the counter, approached the crowd. He stood in silence, swayed unsteadily, and looked with bulging eyes at the men who were talking.

"Gentlemen, I want to ask you a question," he in-

terraptured. "What is going to happen if I take a crater?"

He moved his arms senselessly and looked perplexedly at his enormous belly.

The steppes receded, the country was getting mountainous. In the place of tiny gnarled birch trees there towered now mighty forests. Siberian pines rustled austere and drily in the wind, and the aspens, the adornment of autumn, gleamed, with their tender gold, purple and crimson colors, through the dark needles of the pines. At the railway bridges and at a distance of every verst, guards stood, their solitary figures sharply outlined in the twilight amidst the gloomy foliage of the taiga. At night they frequently had encounters with bears. A few days before, they had found, 'near Krasnoyársk, a guard dead in the embrace of a bear whom he had stabbed to death. There were no end of bears. We were told that they got on the tracks at night, in order to attack the trains which ran over them.

We passed Krasnoyársk, and Irkútsk, and late in the night reached the Baykál station. We were met by the assistant of the commandant, and we were ordered to get the men and horses out of the cars immediately. The open cars with the carriages were to be shifted upon the ice-breakers without being unloaded.

We sat in the small station room up to three o'clock. At the counter we could get nothing but tea and brandy, because the kitchen was being remodelled. The soldiers slept in heaps on the platform and in the baggage-room. Another echelon arrived. It was to cross on the ice-breaker with us. The echelon was very large; there were some twelve hundred men in it. It contained the reservists from the Governments of Ufá, Kazán and Samára, with which to supplement the depleted ranks. Among them there were Russians,

Tatars and Mordvinians, mostly men past middle age, almost old men.

We had taken notice of this ill-fated echelon on our way up. The shoulder-straps of the soldiers were of a crimson color and had neither number nor mark, and so we called them "the crimson detachment." The detachment was in charge of a lieutenant. To avoid providing for the soldiers, he gave them the regulation twenty-one kopeks, and left it to them to feed themselves as best they could. At every station the soldiers raced over the platform and through the adjoining shops to buy food. But there wasn't enough food to be found for such a large number of men; not only no food, but not even boiling water. When the train stopped, stocky, muscular figures of men leaped hurriedly out of the cars and rushed to the booths on which there were large signs with the words, "Boiling Water Gratis."

"Let us have some boiling water!"

"There is none. We are just boiling it. The echelons have used it all up."

They returned slowly, and others, with a look of concentration on their faces, stood waiting in a long row. Sometimes they would get the water, but more frequently they ran back with empty tea-kettles to the moving trains. At the stops they sang with squeaking, lifeless, tenor voices, and, strange to say, they sang only monotonous, dull prison songs, which reflected remarkably the general impression one received from them.

"In vain, yes, in vain, in the prison I bide,  
In vain do I look at the freedom outside.  
Forever I'm lost, forever, I fear!  
And time goes on endlessly, year after year."

At three o'clock a long-drawn whistle resounded through the dark mist of the lake, and the ice-breaker

*Baykál* approached the shore. To reach the landing we walked along the rails and over a seemingly endless platform. It was cold. The "crimson detachment" was drawn up in two rows along the roadbed. Carrying their equipment, with arms at the order, the soldiers stood motionless, with gloomy, set faces. Unfamiliar, guttural sounds could be heard.

We walked up a gang-plank to some kind of bridge, then turned to the right, then to the left, and without noticing it we were on the upper deck of the steamboat. One could not make out where the boat began. Electric lamps burned brightly on the quay, and in the distance could be seen the murky mist that hung over the lake. Soldiers led the excited and nervously twitching horses over the gang-planks, while below the engine, whistling fitfully, pushed the cars upon the steamboat. Then followed the soldiers.

In clumsy grey cloaks, loaded down with bags, with their arms at the trail, the soldiers kept coming in endless procession. At the narrow passage-way leading to the deck, the soldiers crowded together and stopped. At one side, on an elevation, stood an engineer who shouted at the top of his voice:

"Don't stop up the passage-way! Why are you crowding so, you devil's children? Go ahead, don't stop!"

With bent heads, the soldiers pushed forward. There followed new men and again new men—grey, gloomy figures, like a flock of sheep.

Everything was loaded, and the third whistle resounded. The steamboat jolted and began to move slowly backward. An even, oval, sharply-outlined form appeared in the enormous, indistinguishable slip with its high scaffolding, and it immediately became clear where the scaffolding ended and the body of the steamboat began. Jolting in even motion, we were borne into the darkness.

The first-class saloon of the steamboat was brightly illuminated, warm, and comfortable. There was an odor of steam heat, and the state-rooms were cosy and warm. A lieutenant in a white-bordered cap, who was in charge of the "crimson detachment," stepped up to me. We made each other's acquaintance. He turned out to be a very pleasant gentleman. We lunched and walked the deck together. The captain of the steamboat told us of the state of affairs as regards the transference of the armies across the Baykál. The newspapers reported that the movement of the echelons was much retarded by the water-transportation, and that for this reason they were making haste to build the Circum-Baykál Railway. The captain affirmed emphatically that there was no delay on the *Baykál*, and that it was easy to transfer eight thousand men every twenty-four hours. He explained the construction of the Circum-Baykál as due to the zeal of a high personage who was anxious to receive a decoration for his energetic activity.

We retired, some of us in the cabins, and some in the dining room. At daybreak I was awakened by my companion, Shántser.

"V. V——ich, get up! You won't be sorry. I had intended to wake you long ago. It doesn't make any difference now, for we shall land in twenty minutes."

I jumped up and washed myself. It was warm in the dining-saloon. Through the window I could see a soldier lying on the deck. He slept with his head on a bag, huddled under his cloak, his face blue and pinched with the cold.

We went out on deck. Day was breaking. Darkling grey waves rose gloomily and slowly, and the surface of the water looked convex. Beyond the lake the distant mountains stood out in a pale blue haze. Fires were still burning on the quay towards which we were going, and frost-covered mountains, lonely and



gloomy, crowded all about the shore. Snow lay in the gullies and on the heights. The mountains looked as though they had been blackened by smoke, and the pine forests on them appeared like fluffy soot, such as one sees in long-uncleaned stove-pipes. The blackness was amazing.

The lieutenant gave loud expression to his enthusiasm. The soldiers sitting near the smoke-stack wrapped themselves in their cloaks and maintained a morose silence. The whole deck was filled with soldiers, who crowded their neighbors and huddled under their cloaks. It was very cold, and the wind was keen. The soldiers had been freezing all night, and they tried to warm themselves against the smoke-stacks and the ventilators, or by running up and down the deck.

The ice-breaker slowly approached the quay, entered the high, oval slip, and again was welded with the intricate gang-planks and ladders, so that it was once more impossible to tell where the steamboat ended and the bridges began. The assistant of the commandant appeared, and he addressed the customary questions to the officers in command of the echelons.

Hostlers led the snorting horses down the gang-planks, while engines approached the lower decks and took off the cars. The detachments began to move. The assistant of the commandant and the amiable lieutenant in the white-bordered cap were again beside themselves and shouted furiously at the soldiers. The soldiers again pushed each other gruffly and tensely, while carrying bags and ordering their arms, to which the bayonets were now attached.

"Rascals! What are you pushing for? Move on, you sons-of-b——! Why do you stop? You, there, where are you carrying the box with the cartridges? Come this way with the cartridges!"

The soldiers moved fast in endless single file. Looking intently in front of him, came a middle-aged Tatar

with thick lips drooping at the corners; then passed a high-cheeked bearded Permian, his face pitted from small-pox. They all resembled peasants, and it looked very strange to see them carrying muskets in their hands. They walked and walked, their faces changed, and upon all of them lay a dormant thought, as though congealed by the blast of the wind. No one paid any attention to the officers' shouts and curses, as though these were as elemental as the icy wind that howled over the lake.

It was daylight now. Heavy, leaden clouds scurried across the gloomy lake. We went from the landing to the station. Whistling threateningly, engines were shunting along the tracks. It was bitter cold. Our legs stiffened, and there was no place to get them warm. The soldiers stood or sat, crowding their neighbors, with the same morose, unresponsive expression on their faces, as though they were prepared for any suffering. I walked up and down the platform with our apothecary, who, with his aquiline nose on his thin face and in his enormous shaggy cap, did not look like a peaceful drug-clerk, but like a brave Cossack.

"Where do you come from, boys?" he asked the soldiers, who were huddling against the station wall.

"We are from Kazán. Some are from Ufá and Samára," a small, light-haired soldier replied reluctantly. An enormous temse-loaf stuck out from the tent-leaf which was tied over his shoulder.

"Is anybody here from Timókhin district of the Government of Kazán?"

The soldier brightened up.

"I am from Timókhin."

"Really?"

"Upon my word. He is also from Timókhin."

"Do you know where Kámenka is?"

"No . . . no, sir," the soldier said, correcting himself.

"Do you know Levashóvo?"

"Indeed, sir, that's where we go to market," the soldier replied, in joyful surprise.

With a sentiment of friendship that united the two, they began to talk of home places, mentioning one village after another. And here, in a distant land, on the threshold of the kingdom of blood and death, they rejoiced at the names of villages they both knew, and because each pronounced these names as though they were familiar to him.

In the third-class waiting-room, soldiers were making a noise and quarrelling with some one. The freezing soldiers asked the caretaker to light a fire in the stove. The caretaker refused to do so, saying that he had no right to fetch the wood. The soldiers scolded and cursed him.

"Damn your Siberia!" the soldiers said indignantly. "Blindfold me, and I'll find my way home!"

"This isn't *my* Siberia; I am myself from Russia," said the offended caretaker, in self-defence.

"Pay no attention to him! There is a lot of wood here. Let us make a fire with it."

But they didn't care to take the matter into their own hands. We went to the commandant to ask for firewood with which to light a fire in the station, for the soldiers had to stay there another five hours. It turned out that it was quite impossible to obtain the wood, because, according to regulations, fires are lit on the first of October, while it was now only the beginning of September. And there were mountains of firewood all about us!

Our train came in. It was so cold in the cars that our teeth chattered and our hands and feet grew numb and stiff. The chief surgeon himself called on the commandant to ask that the cars be heated. This, too, was quite impossible, because the cars are supposed to be heated only on and after October first.

"Please tell me who may give the order to have the cars heated now?" the chief surgeon asked indignantly.

"Wire to the Chief Commander of Transportation. If he so orders, I shall have the cars heated."

"I beg your pardon. I think you have inadvertently made a mistake. Would it not be necessary to wire to the Minister of Roads of Communication? Perhaps it would be still better to wire directly to His Imperial Majesty."

"Very well, wire to His Imperial Majesty," the commandant said, smiling gently as he turned away.

Our train started. In the chilly cars of the soldiers the usual songs were not heard. Their faces were all pinched with the cold, and they sat close together, wrapped in their cold cloaks. Meanwhile the train passed by long piles of wood, and on the sidings stood long rows of winter cars, but, according to law, they could not yet be put to use.

Up to the Baykál we had been travelling slowly, with long stops between; now, on the Trans-Baykál Road, we did more stopping than travelling. We stopped five or six hours at every siding. We would be travelling ten versts, and then we would stop for hours. We got so used to stopping that, when the cars began to jolt and the wheels to rumble, a sensation of something uncommon overcame us. We barely recovered from it, when we stopped again. Ahead of us, near the Karým Station, there were three landslides on the road, and we could not proceed.

It was still cold, and the soldiers froze in the icy cars. One could not get anything at the stations, neither meat nor eggs, nor milk. It took three or four days to go from one base of supplies to the next. The echelons remained without food for two or three days at a time. At the stations the soldiers paid out of their own money as much as nine or ten kopeks for a pound

of black bread, but not even at the larger stations could enough bread be supplied. The soldiers raced up and down the villages and asked the villagers, "for Christ's sake," to sell them some bread.

At one station we caught up with an echelon of soldiers who were preceding us on the way to the front. In the intervening space between the two trains a crowd of soldiers surrounded the lieutenant-colonel who was in charge of the echelon. The lieutenant-colonel was slightly pale. He evidently was trying to put on a bold front, and he spoke in a loud, commanding voice. In front of him stood an undersized soldier, and he was also pale.

"What is your name?" the lieutenant-colonel asked threateningly.

"Lébedev."

"Second company?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, I'll show you! At every station there is a noise. I told you yesterday to be careful with your bread, and you kept throwing out of the window what was left. Whose fault is it? There is no bread, I told you. Where shall I get it?"

"We understand that no bread can be obtained here," replied a soldier. "But we asked Your Excellency yesterday to take enough bread for two days. We all knew how long we would stop at every siding.

"Shut up!" bellowed the lieutenant-colonel. "Say another word and I'll have you arrested! To your cars! March!"

He went away. The soldiers morosely climbed back into the cars.

"Go starve and croak!" a soldier exclaimed merrily.

Their train started. The pale, glum, pensive faces of the soldiers flickered in the distance.

The hospital trains were getting more and more frequent. At the stops everybody surrounded the wounded

soldiers, eagerly asking all kinds of questions. In the windows one could see the dangerously wounded, with waxen faces and covered with bandages, lying on cots. There was a presentiment of the horror and terror that was there.

I asked a wounded officer whether it was true that the Japs murdered our wounded men. The officer looked at me in surprise and shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't ours murder them? Every chance they get, especially the Cossacks. Let a Jap get into their hands and they will pull out his hairs, one by one."

On the steps of a soldiers' car sat a one-legged Siberian Cossack, with a St. George pinned to his cloak. He had a broad, genial peasant's face. He had taken part in the famous attack at Yudziatun, near Wafang-kou, when two hundred Siberian Cossacks came down like an avalanche on a Japanese detachment and exterminated them with their lances.

"They have fine horses," said the Cossack, "but their weapons are no good—nothing but sabres and revolvers. When we came down on them with our lances they acted as though they were unarmed and could not do anything against us."

"How many did you stab?"

"Three."

This man, with his fine, gentle face, had taken part in this miraculous struggle of the Centaurs. I asked him:

"Well, as you were stabbing them, did you not feel anything in your soul?"

"At first I didn't feel just right. I was afraid to kill a live man. But the moment I stabbed him and he fell down, my soul was all afire, and it would have given me pleasure to kill another dozen."

"Aren't you sorry that you are disabled? Wouldn't you like to have another try at the Japs?" asked our clerk, the officer pro tem.

"No. I've got to think now how to feed my children."

The peasant's face was clouded, and his eyes were bloodshot and filled with tears.

At one of the following stations, as the echelon ahead of us was departing, the soldiers, at the command to take their seats in the cars, remained standing where they were.

"To the cars! Do you hear?" furiously shouted the officer in charge of the echelon.

The soldiers remained standing. Some of them would have climbed back into the cars, but their companions pulled them back.

"We won't go any farther! We have had enough of it!"

The commandant and the chief of the echelon made their appearance. At first they yelled, then they asked what it was all about, why the soldiers refused to go on. The soldiers had no excuse to offer, but they kept repeating:

"We do not want to go on!"

The officers tried to admonish them, and spoke of obedience and the authorities. The soldiers answered:

"Give us a chance and we'll fix up matters with the authorities."

Eight men were arrested, and the rest went to their cars and proceeded on their way.

The train passed by wild and gloomy mountains, winding along a river bed. Above the train hung enormous masses of rocks and shifting heaps of pebbles. You would think that a loud cough would bring all that down upon the train. On a moonlit night we passed an avalanche beyond the Karým Station. The train travelled over a hastily constructed new road-bed. It went very cautiously, almost stealthily, as though it were afraid it might touch the masses of

rocks which almost came down upon it. The old cars creaked, the engine puffed spasmodically as though holding its breath. To the right, in the swift, cold river, towered huge boulders and heaps of talus from the mountain.

It was here that the three landslides had taken place. Why three, and not ten, not twenty? I looked at this hastily constructed mountain roadbed, and I compared it with the railways in Switzerland, in the Tyrol, in Italy, and it was clear to me that there were going to be another ten, nay twenty, landslides. And I thought of the colossal cost of this primitive road, which looked as though it had been constructed by savages.

In the evening a number of echelons again gathered at a small station. I walked up and down the platform. My mind was filled with the accounts of wounded men whom I had met, and the bloody horrors which had taken place *there* stood out vividly before me. It was dark, the clouds scudded by high in the heavens, and a strong, dry wind blew in gusts. Enormous firs on the slope of the hill rustled in the wind, and their trunks creaked. A fire was burning among the pines, and its flames flickered in the darkness.

The echelons were drawn up in close array. In the dim light of the lanterns could be seen the closely-cropped heads of the soldiers as they moved about on their cots. They were singing in the cars. From all sides were borne the sounds of songs, the voices blended together, and something mighty and expansive spread through the air.

"My heroes dear, you're sleeping on,  
Amidst the storm's mad, howling breath;  
My voice will waken you anon,  
And call you to a glorious death."

I walked up and down the platform. The long-drawn, manly sounds of "Ermák" died down; they



were drowned by a monotonous, mournful prison song wafted from another car.

"I look into my bowl and glare:  
Two cabbage-worms are swimming there,  
And after them, in single file,  
An army swims in perfect style."

From the detached last car came the wailing, mournful song:

"As I die for Holy Russia."

And the drawling prison-song went on:

"I throw away my spoon and cry,  
And swallow down my bit of rye.  
A prisoner, not a cur, you see,  
Just such a man as you and he."

Two cars ahead a sound was heard as if some one had received a heavy blow upon his back, and with a shriek of wild joy the boisterous sounds of "The Vestibule" burst out upon the darkness. The shouts reverberated, blending with the whoops and whistlings. Through the mighty male voices, like the swift darting of an adder, came a thin, reiterated, silvery tinkling—somebody was accompanying on a tumbler. They were beating time, and the song was borne in a madly joyous whirlwind in the face of the harsh wind.

I went back, and again, like slowly undulating waves, arose the long-drawn, mournful, majestic sounds of "Ermák." A freight train, coming from the opposite direction, stopped at the station. The echelon with the singers moved away. Re-echoing with a muffled sound in the intervening space, the song rose, mighty and powerful, like a hymn.

"Siberia for the Tsar is won,  
And not in vain we've lived and fought."

The trains remained standing, and then suddenly something seemed to give way in the mighty hymn, and the song, muffled and gloomy, was wafted into the cold, windy darkness.

I awoke in the morning and heard beneath the window of the car the childishly merry voice of a soldier exclaiming:

"It is warm!"

The sky was bright, the sun was shining warm. An endless steppe stretched into the dim distance, and the scorched, rusty grass swayed in the warm breeze. In the distance lay the gentle slopes of hills; lonely Bur-yats flitted by on their horses, and flocks of sheep and herds of dromedaries were everywhere. The supervisor's orderly, the Bashkir Mohamédka, eagerly looked out of the window, with a broad smile on his flat, club-nosed face.

"Mohamed, what is the matter with you?"

"The camels!" he replied, timidly yet joyously, while under the impression of familiar recollections.

It was warm—so warm it was hard to believe that those gloomy, cold, disagreeable days lay behind us. Everywhere merry voices were heard, everywhere songs were being sung.

We passed all the landslides, but continued travelling just as slowly, with just as long stops as before. According to schedule, we should have been at Harbin long ago, but we were still in the Trans-Baykál region.

The Chinese border was not far off, and in our memory the recollection arose of what we had read in the newspapers about the Hung-hu-tzüs, about their cold, beastly cruelty, about the incredible tortures to which they subjected the Russian prisoners. In fact, ever since I had been summoned there was nothing ahead of me that seemed so terrible as these Hung-

hu-tzüs. A cold shiver passed through me at the very thought of them.

At one siding our train stopped for a considerable time. Not far away a camp of Nomadic Buryats could be seen. We went down to get a look at them. We were surrounded by slant-eyed men, with flat, cinnamon-colored faces, who watched us with curiosity. Naked, bronze-colored children crawled on the ground, and women in quaint head-dresses were smoking long pipes. A dirty white sheep with a fat stub-tail was tied to a post. The chief surgeon bought this sheep of the Buryats, whom he ordered to slaughter it at once.

Untying the sheep, they threw it on its back, and a young Buryat, with a puffed face and a big mouth, sat down on its belly. Other Buryats stood around, looking shamefacedly at us.

"What are they waiting for? Tell them to kill the sheep at once, or our train will leave," said the chief surgeon to the janitor of the station, who could talk Buryat.

"Your Honor, they feel embarrassed. They say they do not know how to slaughter in the Russian fashion, and they feel timid about doing it in the Buryat manner."

"What difference does that make to us? Let them kill it any way they want to, so they do it fast."

The Buryats bestirred themselves. They held the legs and the head of the sheep to the ground, while a young Buryat cut open the upper part of the sheep's belly and put his hand through this opening. The sheep squirmed, its clear, foolish eyes began to roll, and past the Buryat's hands swarmed the puffed-up, white entrails of the animal. The Buryat rummaged with his hand near the ribs, the guts flapped with the short breathings, the body jerked more strongly, and the sheep emitted a hoarse gurgling. An old Buryat

with an expressionless face, who was squatting on his heels, looked awry at us, and compressed the narrow, soft mouth of the sheep with his hand. The young Buryat crushed the heart through the diaphragm, the sheep gave a last throb, and its rolling, bright eyes became fixed. The Buryats hastened to flay the sheep.

These strange, flat faces were absolutely dispassionate and indifferent, and the women looked on calmly, puffing at their pipes and spitting upon the ground. The thought suddenly flashed through my mind: even thus the Hung-hu-tzüis will slit our bellies open, calmly smoking their pipes and paying not the slightest attention to our sufferings. With a smile I spoke of this to my companions. They all shrugged their shoulders nervously, as though the same thought had passed through their minds.

This absolute indifference seemed to me most terrible. In the cruel sensuality of a Bashibuzúk, who gloats over a man's suffering, there is at least something human and comprehensible. But these tiny, half-sleepy eyes, that indifferently look through their slanting lids at your immeasurable suffering, that look and do not see. . . . Brrrrr!

At last we arrived at Manchuria Station. Here we had to change cars. Our hospital was combined with Sultánov's hospital into one echelon, and we proceeded together. In the order of the day it was announced that we "had crossed the border of the Russian Empire and had entered the territory of the Chinese Empire."

Before us stretched the same dry steppes, now level, now undulating, covered with rusty grass. At every station there was a grey brick tower with barbicans, and nearby a long, straw-covered signal-post. On an elevation stood a watch-tower on high posts. The echelons were cautioned in regard to the Hung-hu-tzüis.

Cartridges were distributed to the detachment, and guards were placed on the engine and on the platform. We all took our revolvers out of our travelling-bags.

At Uhunor Station, just as we stopped there, a Mongol came running from the steppe, crying out that the Hung-hu-tzü's had killed an advance post consisting of seven soldiers. An officer galloped into the steppe, accompanied by nine armed frontiersmen.

In Manchuria we were given a new schedule, and now we travelled on time. The train stopped at a station only the scheduled number of minutes, and then went on. It was hard for us to get used to such regularity.

We now travelled together with Sultánov's hospital. The surgeons and the Sisters occupied one first-class car, while the attendants travelled in another. The surgeons of Sultánov's hospital told us all about their chief. He charmed everybody with his wit and his pleasant manner, and at times he surprised them by his naïve and cynical frankness. He told his assistants that he had but lately entered military service, at the request of the commander of our corps. He was satisfied with his service because, although he was listed as a junior surgeon in the regiment, he received profitable special appointments for considerable periods of time. An order might have been carried out in a week's time, but the appointment was given for six weeks. He was provided with travelling expenses, but he stayed in one spot, and did not attend to business, except that in the last week he carried out his orders. Then he would return home, would come to the office for a few days, and there would be a new appointment. Meanwhile, it appeared, the other surgeons of the regiment were doing his work.

Sultánov remained most of the time in his compartment with his niece, Novítskaya, a tall, well-built, taciturn lady. She surrounded Sultánov with enthusiastic attention and care, and the whole hospital, in her opin-

ion, existed only for the purpose of attending to the comfort of Aleksyéy Leonídovich, to bring his coffee on time, and to get the cracknels for the soup. When Sultánov left his compartment, he at once monopolized the conversation, speaking in an indolent, pretentious manner, with a sarcastic leer in his eye, while all around him laughed at his witticism and sallies.

The two remaining Sisters of Sultánov's hospital immediately became the centres around which the men gathered. One of them, Zinaída Arkádevna, was a tall, fine-looking lady of some thirty years, a friend of Sultánov's niece. She talked with a pleasing drawl about Battistini, about Sóbinov, about counts and barons whom she knew. One could not at all understand what had brought her to the war. Of the other Sister, Vyéra Nikoláevna, they said that she was the fiancée of an officer in our Division. She kept aloof from Sultánov's company. She was very beautiful, with the eyes of a wood-fairy, and with two heavy braids of hair. She was obviously used to being constantly courted, and she was accustomed to make fun of her adorers—you could see the little devil in her. The soldiers were very fond of her, and she knew them all, and attended to those who had fallen sick. Our own Sisters were thrown completely into the shade by these fascinating Sisters of Sultánov, whom they regarded with veiled hostility.

At the stations Chinamen in blue blouses and trousers appeared. They squatted in front of their baskets, selling seeds, nuts, and Chinese dainties and cakes.

"Oh, capitan! You wantee seed?"

"Cakee? Five kopekee a dozen. Heap sweet," screamed a bronze-colored, half-naked Chinaman, rolling his murderous eyes.

In front of the officers' cars, tiny Chinese boys were dancing, now and then putting their hands to their temples, in imitation of the Russian salute, bowing and

waiting for their pennies. A crowd of Chinamen, showing their shining teeth, looked fixedly at red-cheeked Vyéra Nikoláevna.

"Shango (pretty)?" we proudly asked them, pointing at the Sister.

"Oho! Heap shango! Plitty!" the Chinamen hastened to reply, nodding their heads.

Zinaída Arkádevna came up. With her coquettish, charmingly-drawling voice, she smilingly began to explain to a Chinaman that she would like to marry their Dzan-dzun. The Chinaman listened attentively, but he could not make out what she said, so he only shook his head politely and smiled. At last he caught her meaning.

"Dzan-dzun, Dzan-dzun? You, lady, wantee Dzan-dzun? Not much!"

At one station I witnessed a brief but very fine scene. An officer lazily sauntered up to the car which held the soldiers of the line and shouted:

"Oh, there, you devils! Send me the commander of the platoon!"

"We are no devils! We are men!" a stern but calm voice spoke from the inside of the car.

Then all was quiet. The officer stiffened with rage.

"Who said that?" he shouted furiously.

A young soldier moved out from the dimness of the car. He saluted, and, looking at the officer with fearless eyes, he answered slowly and calmly:

"I beg your pardon, Your Honor. I thought that it was a soldier that was cursing and not Your Honor."

The officer blushed lightly and, to keep up his prestige, scolded the soldier. He went away, pretending that he was not at all embarrassed.

One evening a lieutenant-colonel of frontiersmen entered our car and asked for permission to travel with

us for a few stations. We naturally allowed him to do so. In the narrow compartment, in which the upper berths had been raised, the officers were sitting around a small table playing cards. Others stood around and looked on.

The lieutenant-colonel, too, took a seat near by and watched the game.

"Tell us, please, shall we arrive at Harbin on time, according to the schedule?" Dr. Shántser asked him.

The lieutenant-colonel raised his eyebrows in surprise.

"On time? No, sir. You will be at least two or three days late."

"Why so? We have been on schedule time ever since we left Manchuria Station."

"Well, you will soon see for yourselves. In and about Harbin thirty-seven echelons are stationed, and they can't go forward. Two tracks are occupied by Aleksyéev's train, and another by Flug's train. It is quite impossible to shunt the trains. Besides, the whistles and the rumbling of the trains disturb the viceroy and no trains are allowed to pass at night. So everything is at a standstill. It would be best not to talk of the disorders there."

He broke off abruptly and began to roll a cigarette.

"What is happening there?"

The lieutenant-colonel was silent for a moment and then drew a deep breath.

"I saw it with my own eyes the other day. In a small, close waiting-room the officers and surgeons were crowded together like herrings in a barrel, and the tired Sisters were sleeping on their trunks. At the same time nobody was admitted to the large, magnificent hall of the new station, because Quartermaster-General Flug was taking his customary after-dinner constitutional there. You see, the viceroy has taken a liking to the new station and he has located his own staff



there, so that the new arrivals have to huddle together in the small, dirty, stinking old station."

The lieutenant-colonel continued his story. He was apparently giving vent to his pent-up anger. He told of the sublime indifference of the authorities to business, of the chaos which was reigning everywhere, of the red tape which crushed everything living and every endeavor to work. His words boiled with indignation and with hatred.

"I have a friend who is a cornet in the Primórski Regiment of Dragoons, a fine, brave officer, who has a St. George medal for a truly heroic act. He had been out for more than a month's scouting. Upon his return to Liao-yang he turned to the commissariat with the request that he should be furnished with oats for his horses. 'We can't let you have it without requisition papers.' Now, the requisition papers have to be signed by the regimental chief. Says he: 'For the Lord's sake, I haven't seen my regiment these two months, and I haven't a penny with which to pay you.' So they did not let him have the oats. A week later Liao-yang was abandoned and this very cornet was delegated, with his dragoons, to burn the enormous stores of oats. . . . Or again, Ta-shi-chiau. The soldiers had been starving for three days, and to all the requests the commissariat had but one answer: 'We have nothing.' When they retreated they opened the stores and gave each soldier a box with preserves, sugar, and tea to carry off. The anger of the soldiers knew no bounds and the grumbling never stopped. They walked about, hungry and in rags. A friend of mine, a captain, looking at his company, burst out weeping. The Japs simply shouted: 'Oh, there, you beggars! Skip!' It just frightens one to think what it will all lead to. Kuropátkin nurses the one hope that China will rebel."

"China? What will bring it about?"

"What will do it? The *idea*. Gentlemen, you see, the chief trouble with us is that we have no idea in this war. What are we fighting for? What are we fighting for? Why do we spill our blood? Neither you, nor I, nor, least of all, the soldiers, know. How is it possible, then, to bear all that the soldiers have to bear? What if China rebels? Then everything will become clear at once. They will announce that the Army is turned into a body of Cossacks of the Manchurian Region, and that every man will get a share of land—and the soldiers will become lions. The idea will make its appearance. But what is taking place now? There is an absolute spiritual lethargy, whole regiments are running away. And here we have announced in advance that we don't want Manchuria, that we have no business there. We have encroached upon a foreign country, nobody knows why, and we act the hypocrite. So long as we have started out as scoundrels, we ought to go the whole length of scoundrelism; then there will be at least some poetry in it. Take, for example, the English. When they undertake something, they make things hum."

A solitary candle, which was burning on the card-table, lighted up the interested faces. The bushy mustachios of the lieutenant-colonel, with their upturned ends, quivered and bristled angrily. Our supervisor again felt uncomfortable at these loud, bold remarks, and timidly kept to one side.

"Who is victorious in the war?" continued the lieutenant-colonel. "Gentlemen, this is fundamental: men who are united and inflamed by a common idea come out the victors. We have no idea, and we can't have any. Meanwhile the government, on its side, has done everything to destroy all solidarity. How do they make up our regiments? They pick up a few officers from various regiments, they get together a few hundred soldiers, and behold, 'the military unit' is ready.

We tried to do a bit of sleight-of-hand before the eyes of Europe; see, all the corps are in place, and a whole army has just sprouted out of the ground. And the way they distribute decorations! Everything is done in such a way as to kill all respect for a brave act, and to evoke nothing but contempt for Russian decorations. Wounded officers, after having passed the torments of a whole series of battles, are lying somewhere in a hospital. The viceroy's orderly—he has ninety-eight of them—walks about among them, distributing bed-linen. In his button-hole is a St. Vladímir with the swords. He is asked: "What did you get the St. Vladímir for? For distributing bed-linen?" Gentlemen, so much is certain: over there," said the lieutenant-colonel, pointing over his shoulder with his thumb, "a gigantic conspiracy is taking place against Russia, and there is only one possible outcome: Kuropátkin is going to declare himself a dictator; he will arrest all those men, Aleksyéev, Flug, Stackelberg; will on his own responsibility make peace with Japan, and will, at the head of his army, move on St. Petersburg."

After the lieutenant-colonel went away, there was a long silence.

"In any case, he is a character," Shántser remarked.

"Oh, Lord, how he has been fibbing!" Sultánov said, with a lazy smile. "Most likely the viceroy failed to give him a decoration."

"There is no doubt that he was lying," Shántser admitted. "Just take this: if they really have detained a dozen trains at Harbin, how is it we are travelling on schedule time?"

When we awoke next morning the train was standing still. How long had it been standing? At least four hours. It was funny. Was it possible that the frontiersman's prophecy was already coming to pass?

It did come to pass. Again there were endless stops at every station and at every siding. Neither hot wa-

ter could be procured for the men, nor cold water for the horses, and there was no place to buy bread. Men were starving, and the horses stood in the closed cars without getting any water. When, according to the schedule, we were already to have reached Harbin, we had not gone as far as Tsitsikar.

I had a talk with the engineer of our train. He explained the delay in the same way as the frontiersman had done, namely, that the viceroy's trains choked the roads at Harbin, that the viceroy had ordered the whistling of the trains to be stopped at night, because it interfered with his sleep. The machinist spoke with the same provocation and contempt of Viceroy Aleksyév.

"He lives in the new station, close to his train. His train is always in readiness, so that, if anything happens, he may have the first chance to skip."

The days dragged on, and we crawled along slowly. One evening our train stopped at a siding some sixty versts from Harbin, but our engineer insisted that it would be two days before we reached Harbin. It was calm. The level plain, which was almost a desert, lay motionless before us. The moon was slightly overcast, and the sky showed a silvery sheen through the dry air. Dark clouds were gathering over Harbin, and now and then there were flashes of heat lightning.

All about us was a profound quiet. The men in the cars were asleep. It looked as though the train itself were sleeping in this dim twilight and that everything was sleeping calmly and unbrokenly. And one felt like saying: "How can you sleep when you are so eagerly and passionately expected there?"

I awoke several times during the night. Through my sleep I now and then heard the tense jarring of the car, and then all grew silent again. It was as though the train were making convulsive efforts to push its way ahead, without succeeding in doing so.

Next day at noon we were still forty versts from Harbin.

At last we arrived in Harbin. Our chief surgeon asked the commandant how long we should stop there.

"Not more than two hours. We shall proceed to Mukden without changing cars."

We had intended to make some purchases in Harbin, to make inquiries about letters and telegrams, and to go to the bath-house. Two hours later we were told that we should leave at midnight. Then that we should not get off before six o'clock next morning. We met the adjutant from the Staff of our Corps. He informed us that the roads were all blocked up with echelons, and that we should not leave for at least two days.

All along the road the commandants acted in precisely the same way as at Harbin. They announced in a definite and absolutely confident manner the shortest stopping-time, whereas our train actually would be detained for a dozen hours, or for days at a time. They acted as though, being unable to manifest any regularity in affairs, they took delight in blinding the newly-arrived men with a well-turned, positive fairy-tale of how well everything was arranged.

The roomy new station, painted pale-green, in mission style, was actually occupied by the viceroy and his staff. The small, dirty old station was packed close. It was difficult to make one's way through the crowd of officers, surgeons, engineers and clerks. The prices for everything were exorbitant, the food was wretched. We wanted to get our linen washed, and to go to the bath-house, but we could not find out where to go. At any meeting of scientists where a thousand or more men congregate, there is invariably found an information bureau for the convenience of inquiring strangers. But here, in the very centre of the Army's rear, where half a million men were gathered, we had to get our

information from station janitors, gendarmes, and teamsters.

One was struck by the absence of even an elementary care for this mass of men on the part of those authorities who had brought them there. If I am not mistaken, even "the officers' *étapes*," which were devoid of the simplest comforts, and were always overcrowded, were established at a much later time. In the inns they had to pay from four to five rubles a day for a miserable lumber-room, and even then it was not always possible to get accommodations. They paid a ruble or two for the right to sleep in the corridors. The chief field office of the military medical staff was at Tieh-ling. A large number of surgeons arrived there who had been summoned from the reserve, "in the service of the Field Military Medical Inspector." Upon arriving, the surgeons reported to him, and they were left to take care of themselves as best they could. They frequently had to sleep on the floors of the hospitals between the cots of the patients.

In Harbin I talked with many officers belonging to the various divisions of the service. They spoke well of Kuropátkin, who made a good impression upon them. But they said that he was tied hand and foot, and that he had no freedom of action. I could not understand how an independent, strong man could permit himself to be bound and go on attending to his business. Of the viceroy they all spoke unanimously in the same indignant manner. I never heard a good word of him. Amidst the unheard-of, painful suffering of the Russian Army, he had but one care—his own comfort. It was generally reported that he had an insuperable hatred for Kuropátkin, and that he put all kinds of obstacles in his way and opposed him in every way imaginable. This hostility showed itself even in the most insignificant details. Kuropátkin had introduced khaki shirts and blouses for summer wear—the viceroy

hated them and demanded that the officers at Harbin should wear white blouses.

The greatest provocation was directed against Stackelberg. There were stories about his tamest cow and about the asparagus, and how, during the fight near Wa-fang-kou, it became necessary to abandon a mass of wounded on the field of battle, because Stackelberg had his train in the way of the hospital train. During the battle two companies of soldiers were busy pouring water on the canvas over the general's train, because his wife, who was with him, felt hot.

"Do tell me, have we any leaders of talent?" I asked the officers.

"Possibly Mishchénko. Well, no, he is a cavalryman by mistake. Oh, yes, there is Stoessel! They say he is at Port Arthur, as brave as a lion."

It was rumored that a new battle was being prepared. Harbin was filled with mad debauch. The champagne flowed in rivers, the courtesans were doing a splendid business. The percentage of officers fallen in battle was so great that all expected certain death, and so bade good-bye to life in wild orgies.

Two days later we moved further south.

All about us lay carefully-worked fields of kao-liang and chumiz. They were gathering in the crops. Everywhere could be seen the blue forms of Chinamen at work. At the cross-roads in the villages stood the shrines of the idols, looking in the distance like beehives.

In all probability we would be sent to battle directly from the cars. The officers and soldiers grew more serious. All seemed to hold themselves erect, and it became easier to maintain discipline. That terror and ill-omened fear, which had taken possession of our souls at a distance, now stood before us; hence it was less terrible, and put us in an austere and solemn mood.

## CHAPTER III

### IN MUKDEN

WE arrived. The end of the journey! According to schedule, we ought to have reached it at nine o'clock in the morning, but we did not get there until two o'clock in the afternoon. Our train was standing on the reserve track, and the station authorities hastened with the unloading.

The emaciated horses, stiffened by long standing, came out of the cars, stepping timidly over the frail gang-planks. The company was bustling on the platform, dragging out the carriages and two-wheeled carts. The unloading lasted three hours or more. Meanwhile we dined at the station in a close, overcrowded and dirty dining-room. Dense swarms of flies buzzed in the air, and some of them dropped into the soup and even got into our mouths. Among them raced martins, chirping merrily and keeping close to the walls of the hall.

Beyond the fence of the station platform, our soldiers heaped sacks filled with oats. The chief surgeon stood near by and counted the sacks. An orderly of our Division Staff rapidly approached him.

"Good morning, Doctor. Are we all here?"

"We are. Where shall we be stationed?"

"I shall take you there. That's what I came for."

At about five o'clock everything was unloaded and in place, the horses were hitched to the carts, and we moved on. We went around the station, and turned to the right. Everywhere columns of infantry passed



and heavy artillery rattled. In the distance the city was outlined, and all about us fires were flickering in the camps.

We proceeded about three versts.

The supervisor of Sultánov's hospital came galloping towards us, accompanied by the bugler.

"Gentlemen, move back!"

"Back? Nonsense! The staff orderly told us to go this way!"

Our supervisor and the orderly rode up to us.

"What is the matter? This way, gentlemen, this way," the orderly cried, in a reassuring voice.

"The senior adjutant of the staff told me to go back to the station," the supervisor of Sultánov's hospital replied.

"The devil! It is impossible!"

The orderly and our supervisor galloped ahead to the staff. Our baggage-train stopped. The soldiers, who had not eaten since the previous day, sat morosely by the side of the road and smoked. A strong, cold wind was blowing.

The supervisor returned unaccompanied.

"Yes, we are told to go back to Mukden," he informed us. "There the Medical Inspector of the Field Hospital will tell us where to stop."

"Perhaps we shall have to return again. We had better wait here," said the chief surgeon. "You had better ride down to the medical inspector and inquire," he said, turning to the assistant of the supervisor.

The assistant dashed back to town.

"The disorders are beginning, eh? Didn't I tell you?" my companion Selyukóv exclaimed maliciously. He seemed to be happy because his prophecy was being fulfilled.

Lean, lank, near-sighted, he sat on a flap-eared horse, with his back bent, holding the reins in both hands high up in the air. The meek beast caught sight

of a handful of hay in a cart and stretched its neck out towards it. Frightened Selyukóv awkwardly pulled the reins.

"Whoa!" he drawled out in a threatening manner, looking piercingly through his glasses. But the horse none the less walked up to the cart, jerked the reins aside, and began to nibble.

Lively and ever-merry Shántser burst out laughing.

"I have to laugh, Aleksyéy Ivánovich, as I look at you. What are you going to do when you'll have to run from the Japs?" he asked Selyukóv.

"The devil take the horse! For some reason he does not pay any attention to me!" Selyukóv said in perplexity. Then his lips, baring the gums, twitched into an embarrassed smile. "What am I going to do? Why, when I see that the Japs are near, I'll get down from the horse and start to run, that's all."

The sun was setting. We were still standing. In the distance, on the branch of the railway, Kuropátkin's luxurious train could be discerned, with guards marching up and down the platform in front of the cars. Our soldiers, out of sorts and stiff with cold, sat at the roadside, and munched bread, if they had any.

At last the supervisor's assistant came back.

"The medical inspector says that he doesn't know anything about the matter."

"The devil take them all!" the chief surgeon shouted angrily. "We will go back to the station and encamp there. We certainly cannot stay here in the open all night and freeze."

The baggage-train moved back. We were met by our Division Chief, who was riding with his adjutant in a wide carriage. The old general watched our detachment, squinting behind his glasses.

"Your health, boys!" he shouted merrily.

"We wish your health, Your Excellency!" the detachment bellowed.

Swaying gently on its springs, the carriage drove on. Selyukóv heaved a sigh.

"It would have been better if, instead of saluting the 'boys,' he had seen to it that the 'boys' did not waste a whole day in useless waiting."

Grey stone buildings of the government type were lined up along the straight road which led from the station to the town. To the right and in front of them was a large field. In the trodden furrows lay dry stalks of kao-liang, and wet earth turned up by the hoofs of animals could be seen under spreading willow trees around a well. Our baggage-train stopped near that well. The horses were unhitched, fires were started by the soldiers, and water was heated in the kettles. The chief surgeon rode off in person to find out whither we were to go and what we were to do.

It was growing dark, and the air was cold and damp. The soldiers pitched their tents. Selyukóv, frozen stiff, his nose and cheeks red, stood motionless, with his hands thrust into the sleeves of his coat.

"Oh, it would be nice to be in Moscow now," he sighed. "Just to have a cup of tea and go to the opera to hear 'Evgéni Onyégín.'"

The chief surgeon came back.

"We shall encamp to-morrow," he announced. "Over there beyond the road are two stone barracks. Just now the hospitals of Division K are stationed there, but to-morrow they will be moved and we shall take their place."

Then he went to the baggage-train.

"What is the use of staying here? Gentlemen, let us go over there and make the acquaintance of the surgeons," Shántser proposed.

We went to the barracks. In a small stone wing some eight surgeons were sitting at their tea. We in-

roduced ourselves. In passing, we informed them that we would take their places there to-morrow.

Their faces dropped.

"You don't say. And we were just beginning to fix ourselves up here, because we thought we were to stay here a long time!"

"Have you been here long?"

"Long! We took possession of the barracks just four days ago!"

A tall, portly surgeon in a leather tunic with shoulder-straps whistled in disappointment.

"Really, gentlemen, I must say, it is impossible!" he said. "You must understand, this is the fifth change in a month since we've been here!"

"Comrade, don't you belong to this hospital?"

He raised his hand and shrugged his shoulders.

"Nonsense! I would be lucky if I did! We, my three comrades and I, are doing work fit for a dog! 'Despatched to be at the order of the Military Medical Inspector of the Field Hospital!' And they order us about! I had been working at the combination hospital in Harbin, and had been in charge of a tent containing ninety cots. Suddenly, about a month ago, I received the order from the military inspector, Gorbatsévich, to proceed immediately to Yen-tai. He said to me: 'Take with you only one change of underwear, for you are going there for just four or five days.' When I arrived in Mukden, it turned out that Yen-tai had already been surrendered to the Japs. I was left here in this building, together with three of my comrades, and the eight of us are doing the work which could be attended to by three or four physicians. The hospitals are being changed every week, but we stay on, so that it may be said that we have been despatched to be at the order of this building," he said laughingly.

"Have you not made a report about your situation?"

"Of course we have, both to the inspector of the hos-

pitals and to Gorbatsévich. 'You are needed here, so just wait!' And here I am, with only one change of underwear! Look at this leather tunic! I have not even a cloak, for a month ago it was terribly hot, and now it freezes at night. I begged Gorbatsévich to let me ride down to Harbin to fetch my clothes, and I reminded him that it was his fault that I was almost naked. 'No, no, impossible; you are needed here!' I should like to see him gallivant in nothing but a tunic!"

We froze the whole night in our tents. A strong wind was blowing, and the cold and dust penetrated under the flaps. In the morning we drank tea and went to the barracks.

There two generals were walking up and down, accompanied by chief surgeons. One of these, a general in active service, was F. F. Trépov, Chief of the Sanitary Division; the other, a surgeon, was Gorbatsévich, Military Medical Inspector of the Field Hospital.

"The two hospitals must be given up this very day, do you hear?" the general in active service said authoritatively and emphatically.

"Yes, sir."

I walked into the barracks. Everything in it was topsy-turvy. The soldiers of the hospital were tying bundles and carrying them to the carts, while our baggage-train came up from the camp.

"Where are you going now?" I asked the surgeons, as we were making the change.

"Somewhere on the other side of the town, three versts away. We are ordered to stay in the farm-houses."

The enormous stone barracks were crowded with wooden cots, on all of which lay sick soldiers. The transfer took place under such unfavorable conditions. And what a transfer! A transfer of everything except the walls, the cots, and the sink. They took off

the linen from the invalids, and pulled the mattresses away from under them. They took the hand-basins down from the walls, and carried off the towels, the dishes, and the spoons. At the same time we fetched in the bags for the mattresses, but there was nothing to fill them with. We sent the supervisor's assistant to buy some chumiz straw, while the invalids remained lying on bare boards. The dinner, which we had *bought* from the departing hospital, was being prepared for the sick.

One of the surgeons, "despatched to be at the order of the building," came in and said agitatedly:

"Gentlemen, hurry up with the dinner, for the evacuating invalids must be at the station at one o'clock!"

"Tell us what our work here is to be!"

"You see, the sick and the wounded are sent here from the front positions and from the neighboring wards, and you are to examine them. The light cases, where the patients will get well in a day or two, are taken care of here. All the other patients are expedited to the sanitary trains with tickets like these, with the name, the designation of the disease, and the diagnosis. Yes, gentlemen, but I forgot the most important thing," he interrupted himself, his eyes glistening humorously. "I caution you the authorities can't bear it when the surgeons make the diagnosis 'heedlessly.' In your heedlessness, you no doubt will diagnose the disease of the majority of the patients as 'dysentery' and 'intestinal typhoid.' Keep in mind that 'the sanitary condition of the Army is excellent,' that we have never had such a thing as dysentery, but that there is 'enterocolitis.' Intestinal typhoid may, in rare exceptions, be admitted, but as a rule everything is 'influenza.'"

"A fine disease, that, influenza," Shántser said, laughing merrily. "They ought to put up a monument to the discoverer of that disease."

"That disease is our salvation. At first, we had bites of conscience when we thought of the surgeons of the sanitary trains. Then we explained to them that they should not take our diagnoses seriously, that we knew how to diagnose intestinal typhoid, but that . . ."

Other surgeons arrived. It was half past twelve.

"Gentlemen, why don't you gather up the sick for the evacuation? They must be at the station at one o'clock without fail!"

"The dinner is late. When will the train start?"

"It leaves at six o'clock, but Tréprov gets angry if they are fifteen minutes late. Hurry up, boys, and get through with your dinner! Those who are ordered to go to the station on foot must start at once!"

The patients swallowed their dinner eagerly, and the surgeon continued to hurry them up. Our soldiers carried the feeble patients on litters.

At last the evacuating party was off. Straw was brought, and they began to fill up the mattresses. Men were constantly going in and out, and the windows closed badly. A cold draught swept constantly through the enormous hall. The lean, emaciated soldiers lay on their cots without mattresses, huddling in their clothes. From a corner of the room a pair of glistening black eyes looked at me angrily and with concentrated hatred from underneath a cloak. I walked up to the patient. On the cot near the wall lay a soldier with a black beard and deeply-sunken cheeks.

"Do you want anything?" I asked.

"For a whole hour I've been begging for a drink," he answered bitterly.

I spoke to a Sister of Mercy who happened to pass by, but she only shrugged her shoulders.

"He has been asking for it for a long time, and I told the chief surgeon and the supervisor so. We can't give him unboiled water, because of the dysentery all around

us, and we have none that is boiled. There were some kettles built into the masonry in the kitchen, but they belonged to the other hospital and they took them out and carried them off. We have not yet bought any others."

New parties of patients were constantly brought to the receiving-room. The soldiers were emaciated, in rags, full of vermin. Some of them claimed that they had not eaten for several days. There was a terrible jam, and no room to sit down.

I had my dinner at the station.

Upon returning, I crossed the receiving-room near the dressing-place. A groaning artilleryman lay there on a cot. One foot was booted, the other was covered with a cotton sock, soaked with black blood. The second boot, which had been ripped open, lay near by.

"Your Honor, have mercy upon me! Dress my wound! I have been lying here for half an hour!"

"What is your trouble?"

"A caisson ran over my foot, and it was right on a stone, too."

Senior Surgeon Grechikhin entered the room with a Sister of Mercy, who was carrying some material for dressing. He was a stocky, corpulent man, with a slow, genial smile, and the undress uniform hung strangely on the portly body of a Zémstvo surgeon.

"Well, we shall have to dress it the best way we can," he said to me in an undertone, helplessly shrugging his shoulders. "We have nothing to wash the wound with. The apothecary can't prepare the corrosive sublimate solution because we have no boiled water. The devil take it all!"

I went out. I met two specially detailed surgeons.

"Are you the surgeon of the day?" one of them asked me.

"Yes, sir."



Raising his eyebrows, he looked at me with a smile and shook his head.

"Look out! If you fall in with Trépov, there might be some unpleasantness for you. How is it you are without your sword?"

What, without a sword? This question about a sword amidst the general disorder and turmoil smacked of childish clownishness.

"Certainly you are attending to your duties, so you must have a sword."

"Well, no, he no longer demands it," another surgeon remarked appeasingly. "He has come to understand that the sword is in the surgeon's way when he is dressing wounds."

"I don't know about that. He threatened me with arrest because I was without my sword."

Things went on as usual. Sisters arrived informing us that there was no soap, and that there were no bed-pans for the feeble patients.

"Why don't you go and tell the supervisor?"

"We have told him more than once. You know the kind of man he is. 'Ask the apothecary, and if he hasn't any, ask the storekeeper.' The apothecary says that he hasn't any, and the storekeeper says the same."

I looked for the supervisor. He stood with the chief surgeon at the entrance of the barracks. The chief surgeon had just returned from somewhere and, with a beaming and satisfied face, was saying to the supervisor:

"I have just learned that the current price of oats here is one ruble eighty-five kopeks!"

When the chief surgeon noticed me he grew silent, but we knew all about the oats. On the way to Siberia he had bought about a thousand puds of oats at forty-five kopeks, had brought it along with him with his echelon, and was getting ready to report these oats as having been bought for the hospital here in Mukden.

In this manner he would have made more than a thousand rubles at one stroke.

I told the supervisor about the soap and the rest.

"I do not know about that. Ask the apothecary," he answered, with indifference and almost with surprise.

"The apothecary hasn't any. You must have it."

"No, I haven't."

"Listen, Arkádi Nikoláevich; I have had occasion to convince myself that the apothecary knows full well what he has and what he hasn't, but you do not know anything about your business."

The supervisor was agitated and flew up in anger.

"Maybe! But, gentlemen, I can't help it! To be frank with you, I know nothing about it."

"But how are we to find out?"

"It will be necessary to look through all the bills of lading to find out where things are in the carts. Go and look them through, if you have a mind to!"

I looked at the chief surgeon. He pretended that he did not hear our talk.

"Grigóri Yákovlevich, do tell me whose business it is," I said, turning to him.

The chief surgeon rolled his eyes.

"What's up? Why, a surgeon has got business of his own to attend to. Arkádi Nikoláevich, go and make the proper arrangements."

It was getting dark. The Sisters, in white aprons with red crosses, were giving tea to the patients. They put the bread down in a solicitous manner, and fed the patients gently and tenderly. These splendid girls no longer seemed to be those uninteresting and tiresome Sisters that they had been on the road.

"V. V—ich, have you just received one Circassian?"

"One."

"But his comrade is lying with him and will not leave him."

On the cot lay two Dagestanians. One of them, with

his head hunched between his shoulders, fixed his black, glowing eyes on me.

"Are you sick?" I asked him.

"Not sick," he replied boldly, showing the whites of his eyes.

"Then you can't stay here. You must go away."

"I won't go."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"What is the matter with him? Well, let him lie in the meantime. Lie down on this other cot, so long as it isn't used, but here you are bothering your comrade."

The Sister handed him a mug of tea and a big chunk of white bread. The Dagestanian completely lost his composure and timidly stretched out his hand. He drank his tea eagerly and ate his bread to the last crumb. Then he suddenly arose and made a low bow to the Sister.

"Thank you, Sister. I haven't had anything to eat for two days."

He threw his crimson cowl over his shoulders and went away.

The day came to an end. A few lanterns burned dimly in the enormous, dark barrack-hall, and a cold draught sifted in through the badly-closed enormous windows. The sick soldiers were sleeping, rolled up in their cloaks. In the corner of the hall, where some sick officers were placed, candles were burning at the head of the cots. Some of these officers were reclining and reading, others were talking or playing cards.

In a side room my comrades were drinking tea. I told the chief surgeon that it was absolutely necessary to fix the windows of the barracks that were out of repair. He only laughed.

"Do you think that that is so easy to do? You are not a military man, sir. We have no money for the repair of buildings. We are supposed to stay in tents.

It might be possible to take the money from the economic funds, but we haven't any; our hospital has just been organized. It would be necessary to make a report to the authorities, asking for special items."

He began to tell about the intrigues with which every request for moneys is connected, and of the constant danger of deficits. He told of incredibly stupid sallies, but here one was prepared to believe anything.

At eleven o'clock at night the commander of our corps entered the barracks. He had passed the whole evening in Sultánov's hospital, which was stationed in the adjoining building. Apparently the commander considered it only decent just to take a look at our barracks.

The general crossed the hall, stopped in front of the patients who were not asleep, and asked indifferently: "What is your trouble?" The chief surgeon and the supervisor walked respectfully behind him. On departing, the general said:

"It is very cold in the barracks and there is a draught."

"Neither the doors nor the windows close tightly, Your Excellency," replied the chief surgeon.

"Have them fixed."

"Yes, Your Excellency."

When the general had gone, the chief surgeon burst out laughing.

"Do you suppose he will pay for me if there is a deficit?"

The same confusion reigned on the following days. The dysentery patients ruined the mattresses, and there was no arrangement for washing. About fifty steps from the barracks there were four privies, which served for all the neighboring buildings, including our own. Previous to the Liao-yang engagement, I think, it had served as barracks for the frontiersmen. Inside

the privies there was dirt, and the seats were soiled with the bloody effluvia of the dysenterics, and both invalids and well men used them. Nobody cleaned these privies: they were used by all the adjoining buildings alike, and those in charge of them could not make out whose duty it was to attend to their cleaning.

New patients arrived and we despatched the old ones to the sanitary trains. We received many officers. The complaints of most of them were strange and indefinite, and it was not possible to establish any objective symptoms. In the barracks they were in good spirits and no one would have thought that they were invalids. All of them persistently begged to be despatched to Harbin. It was rumored that a new battle was to begin in a few days, and it became clear what the trouble was with these warriors. And this became still more clear when they began to tell us and each other modestly and in detail about their exploits in past battles.

Here is a contrast. There arrived a hundredman, an Ussurian, a handsome, sunburnt young fellow with a black mustache. He suffered terribly from dysentery and he was to be sent on.

"Under no consideration. No, Doctor, you must fix me up some way or other here."

"There are no conveniences here. It is impossible to keep the proper diet, and the housing is bad."

"You must help me somehow. There's a battle ahead, my comrades are going into action, and here you want to send me off. No, I want to stay here."

It was evening. A lean general with a sandy beard rapidly walked into the barracks. Dr. Selyukov was on duty. With eyes bulging behind his glasses, he slowly moved his spindle legs through the hall.

"How many patients have you?" the general asked, dryly and abruptly.

"At the present moment, about ninety."

The general silently surveyed him from head to foot.

"Do you not know that so long as I am here with my cap off you have no right to keep yours on?"

"I did not know. I am from the reserve."

"Oh, you are from the reserve? I'll put you under arrest for a week, and then you won't be from the reserve. Do you know who I am?"

"No, sir."

"I am the Inspector of Hospitals. Where is your chief surgeon?"

"He's gone to town."

"Well, where is the senior assistant? Who takes his place?"

The Sisters ran to fetch Grechfkhin, to whom they whispered that he should take off his cap. One of the surgeons on special duty flew up to the general and, standing at attention, reported:

"Your Excellency, in the movable field hospital there are 98 patients, among them 14 officers and 84 of the rank and file."

The general nodded in assent and turned to approaching Grechfkhin:

"What a disorder there is here! The patients lie in their caps and the surgeons themselves walk about in their caps. Do you not see that there are icons here?"

Grechfkhin looked about and replied curtly:

"There are no icons."

"What?" the general shouted angrily. "Why are there none? What disorder! And you, too, Lieutenant-Colonel!" he said, turning to one of the sick officers. "You ought to be an example to your soldiers, and there you are lying in a cap! Why are the soldiers' guns and knapsacks near them?" he again shouted to Grechfkhin.

"There is no armory here."

"What disorder! Things are lying about in a heap, even the rifles. It isn't a hospital, it's a bazaar!"

The general walked on, accompanied by the surgeons,

and angry, senselessly-insulting remarks flowed without interruption.

In going out he met our Corps Commander.

"To-morrow I shall take my two hospitals away from you," the Corps Commander informed him, in lieu of greeting.

"How is that, Your Excellency? Are we to be left without them?" the inspector replied, in an entirely new, modest and weak voice. He was only a major-general and the commander was a full general.

"I don't care. The field hospitals must stay with us and we leave to-morrow for the positions."

After long *pourparlers*, the Corps Commander agreed to give to the inspector the movable hospitals of his other Division, which were to arrive from Mukden the following day. The generals went away. We were indignant at all this stupidity and senselessness, and at the topsy-turvy manner in which everything was done. In the face of the serious matter of aiding the patients, there seemed to be an endeavor to turn all the attention to the conventional attitude of store-keepers. The surgeons on special duty looked at us and laughed.

"What strange people you are! That's what the authorities are for, namely, to yell! What would they have to do if it weren't for that? That's the way they manifest their activity!"

"They had better look to it that the patients do not freeze in the draught, and that there should be an end to what took place here day before yesterday!"

"Don't you know that to-morrow will be just the same?" said a surgeon on special duty, with a sigh.

Two surgeons from Sultánov's hospital came in. One of them was embarrassed and angry, while the other kept smiling. It turned out that the inspector had raked them over the coals in the same way, and had threatened the surgeon on duty with arrest. The

surgeon on duty had started to report: "I have the honor to inform Your Excellency . . ." "What? What right have you got to inform me? You report to me, but you don't inform me! I'll put you under arrest for a week!"

The inspector of the hospitals who had swooped down upon us was Major-General Ezérski. Before the war, he had been serving with the Moscow commissariat and still earlier he had been a chief of police at Irkútsk. In that gloomy, tragical atmosphere of humor, which characterized that war, the composition of the higher medical administration stands out as a brilliant black diamond. I shall have to say a great deal more about it. Here I shall only remark that the chief management of all the sanitary matters in our enormous army was in the hands of an ex-governor, a man totally ignorant of medicine and beyond measure unbusiness-like. The inspector of the hospitals was an ex-chief of police. And so it is not strange that he superintended the medical institutions in apparently the same manner in which he formerly had superintended the streets and saloons in the city of Irkútsk.

The next morning I was sitting in my room when I heard outside a haughty voice:

"Oh, there! Inform your supervisor that flags should be displayed in front of the hospital! The viceroy is coming to-day!"

Past the window flitted a general's cloak with its red lining. I put my head out of the window: Medical Inspector Gorbatsévich was walking in agitation to the adjoining barracks. Selyukóv was standing near the porch, looking bashfully around him.

"Did he address you in that manner?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes, me! The devil take it! I was so thunder-struck that I completely lost myself and didn't know what to reply."



Selyukóv went to the receiving-room in a surly mood.

Work was seething near the barracks. The soldiers were sweeping the street in front of the building, scattering sand, and raising a pole with the Red Cross and national flags. The supervisor was present, and he was now active and energetic, and knew exactly where to get things.

Selyukóv entered the room and seated himself on his bed.

"There are as many high officers here as dogs. The moment you go out you run into one of them, and you can't make them out. Just as I entered the receiving-room I saw a dandy with red stripes standing there. I was on the point of making a report to him when, behold, he stiffened up and saluted. I guess it was a Cossack."

He drew a deep breath.

"Well, I prefer to freeze in a tent, for here there are more superiors than our men."

Shántser, a little embarrassed and deep in thought, entered the room. He was the surgeon of the day.

"I don't know what to do! I ordered the removal of two mattresses from the cots—they had been completely spoiled by two dysenterics who had been lying on them. The chief surgeon came and said: 'Leave them! Don't change them! There are no other mattresses.' I said to him: 'That doesn't make any difference, it would be better for a new patient to lie down on the boards. When he gets here he will very likely be exhausted by hunger and fatigue, and will become infected with dysentery.' The chief surgeon turned away from me and said to the barracks-servants: 'Don't dare to remove the mattresses, do you hear?' And he went away. He is afraid that the viceroy would suddenly notice that two patients had no mattresses."

In and around the barracks they continued feverishly

their work of cleaning. It simply nauseated me. I left the building and went into the fields. In the distance stood our barracks, neat, and spruced-up with waving flags; and within were invalids, shivering in the draught, dirty, and permeated with the infection from the mattresses—a common woman, powdered and painted, in her best clothes, and in dirty, ill-smelling underwear.

There had been no transfer of patients for two days, because the sanitary trains were not running. The viceroy was travelling from Harbin like the Tsar, more than the Tsar; all the traffic on the railway had stopped on his account. The sanitary trains with patients, and the trains with soldiers and guns that were hurrying south for the imminent battle, came to a standstill. Patients arrived at our hospital in endless numbers. All the cots and litters were occupied, and they began to place the patients on the floor.

In the evening, they brought fifteen wounded Dagestanians from the positions. These were the first wounded men that we had received. In burkas and crimson cowls they sat and lay about, their black, burning eyes peering under heavy eye-brows. Amidst the sick soldiers, the grey, gloomy, and melancholy soldiers that filled the receiving-room, this band of blood-stained men, with the air of battle and danger about them, stood out as a bright, attractive point.

They also brought their officer, a hundredman, who had been wounded in the hand. Animated, with nervously-glittering eyes, the hundredman told how they had mistaken the Japs for their own comrades, how they had ridden up close to them, and, getting within gunshot, had lost seventeen men and thirty horses. "But we have made them suffer for it," he added, with a proud smile.

Everybody crowded around him, and the surgeons, Sisters, and sick officers put all kinds of questions to

him. They put the questions with kindly and eager interest, and again all the patients around about us appeared dull in comparison with him who was surrounded by the aureole of battle and danger. I suddenly understood that handsome Ussurian who had so stubbornly refused to be sent away on account of his dysentery.

An adjutant came from the viceroy to inquire about the health of a wounded officer. Then men came from the Red Cross Hospital and insistently demanded that the officer should be transferred to them. The officer agreed to go and he was carried away to the Red Cross, which heretofore had contemptuously refused to receive sick men from us.

In the army sick men are pariahs. They have done hard work, have suffered just as much, perhaps more grievously and irreparably than many a wounded man, but everybody looks upon them with indifference and even with scorn. They are so uninteresting. They belong behind the scene, and they fit in so little with the glaring staging of war. When the hospital is full of wounded men, the higher authorities are zealous in their attentions, but when there are sick men in the hospital, they hardly ever look in. The sanitary trains which belong to the department of war make every effort to ward off the sick men. It has happened more than once that a train would be standing for a week or two waiting for the wounded. There are no wounded, but the train continues to stand and block the road; yet they refuse to receive sick patients, even those without any contagion.

Sultánov's hospital was doing its work in the adjoining barracks. Sultánov appointed his niece, Novítskaya, as senior Sister of Mercy. He said to the surgeons:

"Gentlemen, do not put Agláya Aleksyéevna in

charge of the hospital. Let the junior Sisters do that duty."

The Sisters had no end of work to do; they were busy about the patients from morning to night. Novitskaya rarely made her appearance in the barracks. Frail, elegantly-dressed, she walked listlessly through the halls and returned to Sultánov's room, where she sat from morning till night. Zinaída Arkádevna at first went to work with a vim. Proudly displaying her red cross and her white apron, she attended the sick, giving them tea and smoothing their pillows. But she soon cooled off. One evening I happened to call on them in their barracks. Zinaída Arkádevna was sitting on a stool near the table, with her hands in her lap, and saying in an attractively-languid voice:

"I am all fagged out. I've been on my feet all day, and my temperature is up to 100 degrees; I've just taken it. I wonder whether it is the beginning of typhoid. And I'm in charge for the day. The senior surgeon has positively forbidden me to undertake this duty, he's so severe. Poor Nastásya Petróvna will have to do the work for me."

Nastásya Petróvna was the fourth Sister in the hospital, a simple, meek girl, who had been taken from the Red Cross Society. She took charge, and Zinaída Arkádevna went with Sultánov and Novitskaya to take supper with the Corps Commander.

Fairy-like Vyéra Nikoláevna worked like a hero. The whole work in the hospital lay on her shoulders and on those of meek Nastásya Petróvna. The sick officers marvelled because there were only two Sisters in that hospital. Soon Vyéra Nikoláevna took sick. For a few days she kept on her feet, but at last she went to bed, with her temperature at 104. Nastásya Petróvna was left to do all the work. At first she protested, and informed the senior surgeon that the work was beyond her strength. The senior surgeon was that

very Dr. Vaslev who had almost ordered the arrest of a supervising officer in Russia, and who the other day had so "strictly" forbidden Zinaída Arkádevna to take charge of the hospital. He shouted at Nastásya Petróvna as though she were a chamber-maid, and he told her that she had no business coming here if she wanted to idle away her time.

In our hospital two supernumerary Sisters were added to the four regular ones. One of them was the wife of an officer from our division. She had joined our echelon at Harbin, had wept all the time, and was filled with sorrow and care for her husband. The other had been attached to one of the hospitals of the rear, and was transferred to us when she learned that we were advancing to the front. She was eager to be under fire, and so she declined her salary, took up the duties of a supernumerary Sister, and persistently solicited the authorities until her request was granted. She was a broad-shouldered young woman of about twenty-five years of age, with her hair cut short, with a low voice, and with a heavy, masculine gait. When she walked, her skirt flapped strangely and awkwardly about her strongly-built, widely-striding legs.

An order came from the staff of our corps for both hospitals to break up and to leave next morning for the village of Saho-taz, and wait there for further instructions. What was to be done with the patients and on whose hands were they to be left? Hospitals of another division of our corps were to come to take our places; but the viceroy's train had blocked all traffic on the railway, and nobody knew when they would arrive. And yet we were ordered to leave next day.

Again everything in the barracks was turned topsy-turvy. They took down the wash-basins, packed the medicine-chests, and were getting ready to take the kettles out of the masonry in the kitchen.

"How is that, please?" Grechikhin said, wonderingly. "We cannot leave the patients to their fate."

"I must carry out the orders of my immediate superiors," replied the chief surgeon, looking askance at him.

"Precisely. That is not a subject for discussion," the supervisor put in officiously. "We are attached to the division and all its belongings have already left. How dare we not carry out the orders of the Corps Commander? He is our chief."

"You mean to say we are to abandon the patients?"

"We are not responsible. That is the business of the local authorities. Here is the order, and it says there distinctly that we must leave to-morrow."

"Whatever it may say there, we will not abandon the patients!" we declared.

The chief surgeon hesitated for a long time, but finally he decided to stay and to await the arrival of the hospitals. Besides, Ezérski declared emphatically that he would not let us off until somebody came to take our place.

The question arose: why all this destruction, taking-away of kettles, pulling-away of mattresses from under the sick? So long as our corps can get along with two hospitals instead of four, why would it not be simpler for us to stay here, and for the arriving hospitals to go directly South with the corps? But everybody understood that this was impossible, because in the neighboring hospital were Dr. Sultánov and Sister Novitskaya, and our Corps Commander did not want to part with them. Hence let the sick "holy cattle" wallow for days on bare planks, without food and without medical attendance.

But here was something totally incomprehensible: for a whole month Mukden had been the centre of our army; our army had been over-abundantly supplied with hospitals and surgeons; nonetheless, the sanitary

authorities did not know how to organize or care to organize a permanent hospital at Mukden. They were satisfied to catch the passing hospitals by their coat-tails, and to install them in their barracks until the accidental appearance of new hospitals on the horizon. Could not all that have been arranged differently?

Two days later the expected hospitals arrived in Mukden and we gave the barracks over to them and moved South. We felt gloomy and downcast. Before us an enormous complicated machine was doing its work. In it a crack opened, through which we looked and saw wheels, axles, pinions; everything was busily and furiously in motion, but things did not articulate, and were moving aimlessly and in confusion. What was this? An accidental break in the mechanism at the spot which we were watching? Or was all this heavy machine making this noise and bustle just for appearances, while really unfit for work?

In the south heavy peals of thundering cannon were constantly heard. The Battle of Sha-ho was beginning.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BATTLE OF SHA-HO

WE left Mukden early in the morning in column of route. The evening before it had rained; the roads glistened with a light, slippery mud, and the sun shone through a transparently-dim cloud. The weather was mild and the air was quiet. Far to the south the dull thunder of the cannon resounded continually.

We were on horseback. The detachment went on foot. The green carriages and carts creaked. In a clumsy, four-horsed hospital carriage the white caps and aprons of the Sisters of Mercy could be seen. The short-haired supernumerary Sister did not ride with the others, but went on horseback. She was dressed in male attire, in grey trousers and tall boots, and had on a cap of Archangel fur. In her skirt she had made a frightful impression, but in male attire she looked a fine fellow. Now her broad shoulders and her masculine gait appeared to advantage. She was a splendid horsewoman. The soldiers called her the "Boy-Sister."

The chief surgeon asked a passing Cossack how to get to the village of Saho-taz, and the Cossack showed him the way. We reached the river Hun-ho, which we crossed by means of a bridge, and then turned to the left. Now this was strange; according to the map, our village lay to the southwest of Mukden, and here we were going to the southeast. We told the chief surgeon so, and tried to persuade him to take a Chinese guide. Stubborn, self-confident, and stingy, Davýdov said that he would bring us there better than any Chinaman.



We went some three versts along the bank of the river to the east. Finally Davýdov himself saw that we were going wrong and so we recrossed the river over another bridge.

It became clear to everybody that we had gotten the devil knew where. The chief surgeon sat majestically and glumly on his horse, giving curt commands and not exchanging words with any one. The soldiers lazily dragged their feet through the mud and laughed contemptuously. In the distance appeared the bridge over which we had crossed two hours before.

"Now, Your Honor, shall we turn again to that bridge?" the soldiers asked us, ironically.

The chief surgeon studied the map for a while, and this time turned us straight to the west.

Every once in a while we would stop. The horses which had not been ridden shied and overturned the carts. In one carriage the shaft was split, in another one the whiffle-tree was broken. We had to stop to get them fixed.

In the south the cannon continued to roar like slow, distant peals of thunder. One could hardly believe that hell and death were there. The soul was anguished and one felt conscience-stricken: there the battle is raging, wounded are wallowing on the ground, we are needed there—and here we are aimlessly and lazily circling through the fields.

I looked at my compass; we were going to the north-west. Everybody knew that we were going in the wrong direction, and yet we had to go, because the stubborn old man did not want to show that he saw his mistake.

In the evening the outlines of a Chinese town and the curved roofs of towers and shrines appeared. On the left could be seen a series of government buildings and the white smoke from the trains. Among the soldiers a reserved, hostile laugh arose: this was Mukden. After

a whole day's marching we had come back to our stone barracks.

The chief surgeon kept out of the way, and stopped for the night in a suburban Chinese village.

The soldiers pitched their tents, made fires with kao-liang, and heated some water in their kettles. We were put up in a roomy, clean, stone farmhouse. The politely-smiling Chinese farmer in his silk coat took us over his farm and showed us the estate. It was surrounded by a high clay fence and wide-branching poplar trees. Yellow ricks of kao-liang, chumiz, and rice were to be seen, and they were threshing on the clean threshing-floor. The proprietor told us that he had a shop in Mukden and that he had taken his wife and children there; for here, he said, he was in constant danger from passing soldiers and Cossacks. The week before some Dagestanians had seized his mother, a woman of fifty years, and carried her off.

On the door-posts hung two bright-colored, slant-eyed figures in fantastic apparel. There was also a long, vertical strip with Chinese hieroglyphics. I asked him what it said. The proprietor answered:

"Good to speak."

"Good to speak"—an inscription on the entrance, with the entrance gods. It was strange; and, looking at the calm and polite man, I understood.

We arose at daybreak. Dimly red streaks appeared in the east, and the trees were covered with mist. In the distance the cannon were roaring already. Soldiers with pinched faces were morosely hitching the horses. It was cold: they had slept under thin cloaks, or had run about all night in order to keep themselves warm.

The chief surgeon met an acquaintance of his of whom he inquired about the road, and he led us once more without taking a guide. We again lost the road,

going God knows where. Again shafts broke, and the fresh horses overturned the carts. As we approached Saho-taz, we fell in with our division baggage-train. The chief of the baggage-train showed us a new order which said that we were to proceed to the Su-ya-tun Station.

We moved on to find the station. We crossed a river over a pontoon-bridge, walked through villages, and waded through brooks swollen by the rain. Soldiers, up to their waists in the water, helped the horses to pull out the carts that got stuck in the mud.

Then there came fields. On both sides could be seen close ricks of kao-liang and chumiz. I was riding back of the baggage-train. I could see the soldiers running away from the carts, seizing armfuls of fodder, and running back again to the carts. Again and again they ran in plain sight of everybody. The chief surgeon rode by. I sternly asked him:

"Tell me, is this done with your permission?"

He acted as though he did not understand.

"With my permission? What?"

"All this plundering of the fodder from the Chinese fields."

"I declare! The rascals!" Davýdov said, indifferently, but with a show of indignation, and, lazily turning to the sergeant-major, he added: "Nezhdánov, tell them to stop! You, V. V——ich, please see to it that all this looting is stopped," he said in theatrical tones, turning to me.

"If you mean it, issue a strict order to the soldiers, for otherwise, as you see, they are not at all embarrassed in your presence."

In front of us soldiers kept running into the fields and stealing bundles of fodder. The chief surgeon rode off at a gentle trot. The sergeant-major, who had been sent ahead, came back.

"What they took before was within the allowance,

but this is beyond the allowance," he smilingly explained the prohibition of the chief surgeon. On top of every cart could be seen a heap of golden sheaves of chumiz.

Beside me our soldiers marched. They had heard my talk with the chief surgeon.

"Of course, we have to take it! What's the use talking about it? Why should our horses starve?" they said.

"The horses shouldn't starve at all," I replied. "The government gives money for their upkeep."

"Yes, it gives money! Why should we waste Russian money? What's the use pitying these Chinamen?"

"It says in the Bible that you may take," remarked Bastrýkin, a stocky soldier with the face of a scoundrel.

"Where does it say that in the Bible? Show me! I never saw it there!"

"My Bible is torn," Bastrýkin replied, smiling.

"He must have read an awful lot in it," another soldier ventured in explanation.

Towards evening we arrived at the Su-ya-tun Station, where we bivouacked to the east of the tracks. The guns now roared nearby, and we could hear the whistling of the projectiles. To the north the sanitary trains passed. To the south could be seen the flashes of bursting shrapnel in the twilight. With increasing anguish we looked at the flaring fires and thought: now begins the real thing.

We were ordered next morning to cross the railway tracks and to take up a position at the village of Siao-kii-shinpu, about half a verst from the station.

As we entered the village, Chinese carts laden with all kinds of movables hastily drove out of the yards. On top of the carts sat some Chinese women, hiding their faces from us. Beside them walked a Chinaman with a flexible shoulder-yoke across his neck, and at the ends of the yoke little Chinese babies swayed in round baskets. The babies were full-faced and plump,

with black top-knots, and they sat with their legs under them like little idols. The Chinaman trudged along, gloomily watching the ground, while the babies in the swaying baskets looked with their little black eyes merrily and inquisitively at us.

Our baggage-train stood in a large square garden which was surrounded with white willows. The tents were pitched. Dr. Sultánov's hospital was stationed in the same village. They had arrived the evening before and had bivouacked not far from the place where we took up our position.

While leaving Mukden, Dr. Sultánov got into a violent conflict with his surgeons. For the belongings of the four junior surgeons and the supervisor with his adjutant a separate cart is officially set aside, whereas the chief surgeon is provided with money with which to furnish his own cart and two cart-horses. Sultánov bought neither cart nor horses, put the money into his pocket, and ordered his belongings to be loaded on the surgeons' cart. The surgeons protested, and ordered the supervisor to haul the belongings of the surgeon-in-chief down from the cart. They reported the matter to Sultánov. He was beside himself, shouted at the surgeons and the supervisor as at common orderlies, stamped his feet, threatened to have them all arrested, and ordered his things to be put back on the cart immediately. The surgeons were terribly provoked, and were getting ready to send a report accusing the chief surgeon. But whom would this report reach first? The Division Commander, an easy-going old man, who did not want to have any quarrels with anybody; then it would reach the Commander of the Corps, Sultánov's patron. And the surgeons, being typical Russians, were satisfied with having grumbled and having been provoked "among friends."

Sultánov had somehow completely changed. In the car he had invariably been kind, witty, and jolly; now,

on the march, he was overbearing and fierce. He rode his horse, angrily looking askance, and nobody dared to talk to him. So it went on until evening. We came to our stopping-place. As a first duty it became necessary to find a comfortable, clean farmhouse for the chief surgeon and the Sisters, and they put up the samovar and prepared the dinner. Sultánov dined and drank tea, and he again became gentle, elegant, and witty.

Our chief surgeon and the supervisor took care of the detachment as best they knew how. It is true, the soldiers slept in the cold under their summer cloaks, but the fur jackets had not yet been furnished anywhere in the Army. Our soldiers at least had enough to eat, and everything was done to provide them with sufficient food. In Sultánov's hospital nobody looked after the detachment. The whole personnel seemed to exist only in order to pamper and coddle Dr. Sultánov and the Sisters. The detachment froze and went without food, and was obliged to look out for itself. The soldiers grumbled, but Sultánov looked upon their complaints with naïve and cynical good-nature. At one time the senior surgeon, Vaslev, came to him with a complaint against a soldier of the detachment. Vaslev had been giving some command when a soldier blurted out to him:

"All you know how to do is to command! You don't feed us, in the night we freeze, and yet you want us to carry out orders!"

Sultánov frowned contemptuously. The affair happened in the evening, after he had had a good dinner, and when he was in good spirits.

"Oh, just leave them alone! God be with them! To tell the truth, they are right. We ride on horseback and they walk. When we arrive, the first thing we do is to find a farmhouse for ourselves and to order dinner and tea, while they are tired and hungry. I sent

somebody to get some meat for them, but they didn't get anything, only enough for a beef-steak for us. If we walked, starved, and froze with them, they would be carrying out our orders."

A day, two, three, passed. We were perplexed beyond measure. All along the front the guns roared madly, and past us went transports with wounded. And yet we received no order to encamp with our hospitals. The tents, instruments, and the dressing-materials lay peacefully packed away in the carts. On the railway sidings stood other hospitals, for the most part also packed up. What did all this mean? There were rumors that twenty thousand men had dropped from the lines, that Sha-ho Brook was flowing red with blood, and here we were, dozens of surgeons, sitting with our hands folded and with nothing to do.

Not very far from us fighting was going on at full blast. Rapid rifle fire was heard constantly. On the roads infantry divisions and artillery parks moved along, or dust-covered Cossacks galloped. Something terrible, very near to us, was taking place; everybody was busy and in a hurry—but we remained inactive, and strangers to everything. We rode down to the positions, watched the fighting from nearby, and experienced the sharp sensation of being under fire. But even this sensation left a bad taste in the mouth, because it was stupid to court danger for nothing whatsoever.

Our detachment was perplexed. Like us, they experienced the same lonely feeling of compulsory inactivity. The soldiers went beyond the village to look at the fight, eagerly asked the passing Cossacks for news, and vividly and excitedly told us the rumors about the progress of the battle.

Once three soldiers of our detachment came to the supervisor and announced to him that they wanted to

be transferred to the line. The chief surgeon and the supervisor were surprised; they had frequently during the journey threatened offending soldiers with a transfer to the line, because they saw in this a terrible punishment, and here the soldiers themselves were asking to be sent there.

All three of them were fine young fellows. As I said before, in the regiments of our corps there were very many middle-aged men, who were oppressed by ailments and by cares for their large families. But our hospital detachments consisted for the greater part of young, strong, sturdy soldiers, who did the comparatively easy duties of grooms, caretakers, and servants. The distribution was made by means of documents, and in these documents you could not tell these Ivánovs, Petróvs, and Antónovs, one from the other.

The supervisor tried to dissuade the soldiers, and then he said that he would send their petition to the staff. Most surprised at their request was our clerk, the military supernumerary official Bruk, a nice-looking and appallingly cowardly boy.

"But it is much quieter here," he insisted. "What is going to happen there? They will kill you, and you will leave a family behind!"

"Never mind, all I have is a wife. If they kill me, she'll marry another."

Thus spoke a tall fellow with a hoarse, low voice, an ex-grenadier. His face looked stern and introspective, as though he were peering at something in his soul, something big and important.

"But if you are wounded! If you lose both your legs, and are left a cripple for the rest of your life!"

"What of it?" He was silent for a moment, and then slowly added: "Perhaps I want to suffer."

Bruk looked in perplexity at him.



"The line is a holy thing," another soldier remarked.

"But our business is still more holy," Bruk retorted in a falsetto voice. "To aid our wounded brothers, by our care and love to alleviate their terrible suffering. . . ."

"Not at all! It's all the same rigmarole! But over there they are shooting, others are fighting, and what are we doing? Nobody cares to look at us. Even at reviews some general, or the Tsar himself, looking at us, says, 'Oh, well, they are not of the line,' and rides past us."

On the twenty-ninth of September the firing increased in intensity. The guns roared without interruption, and along the positions it sounded as though enormous cupboards were tumbling over each other with a thundering noise. The projectiles flew into the distance with a whistling screech, and these screeches blended together and howled like a hurricane. The rifle fire crackled constantly. There were rumors that the Japanese had outflanked our right wing and were ready to break through the centre. Soldier orderlies on horseback kept riding up to us and asking us whether we did not know where such-and-such a staff was. We did not know. One soldier shrugged his shoulders in gloomy pensiveness, saying:

"What shall I do now? I was sent by the commander with a special despatch; I have been riding since morning, and nobody can direct me."

He rode on dispiritedly, not knowing whither to go.

Towards evening we received from the Staff of the Corps the order for the two hospitals to proceed south immediately, and to stop and encamp at the Sha-ho Station. The carts were hurriedly loaded, and the horses hitched to them. The sun was setting. To the south, not more than a verst away, the flashes of the

Japanese shrapnel burst in clusters and the rifle detonations cracked all the time. We were supposed to go straight there.

Sultánov, angry and confused, was sitting in his farmhouse and trying to find the Sha-ho Station on the map. It was the second station on the railway, but in his excitement Sultánov could not find it. He angrily cursed the authorities.

"The devil knows what this is! According to law, the movable field hospitals are supposed to be stationed eight versts from the positions, and we are sent right to the firing-line."

It was really impossible to see what our hospitals could do in that hell which was glistening and rumbling in the distance. We surgeons gave each other our home addresses, so that, in case of danger, our families might be informed.

The projectiles tore by, the rifle fire rattled. On the soul fell both dread and joy, as though wings had grown out, and suddenly it became clear why the soldiers had asked to be transferred to the line. The "Boy-Sister" sat on her horse, with a blanket in place of a saddle, and with eager, rapacious eyes looked into the misty distance, where the shrapnel burst more and more brightly.

"Shall we blunder again, and not get to the right place?" she said, agitatedly. "Gentlemen, persuade the chief surgeon to take a guide."

"We blundered in daytime, so what will it be at night?" Selyukóv said, ominously, heaving a sigh. "And the horses are fresh and timid. When the first projectile falls, they will run away with the whole baggage-train."

We moved towards the railway and followed the track to the south. Telegraph posts, broken to splinters, lay all about, and the wires were down and in a tangle. We were overtaken by a Cossack, who handed

packages to the two chief surgeons. They were orders from the corps. The hospitals were commanded to pack up immediately, to leave Sha-ho Station—it was assumed that we were already there—and to return to our former camping place at Su-ya-tun.

In good spirits we all turned back. Only the "Boy-Sister" was grieved and ready to cry from annoyance. She kept turning around and looking with burning, sorrowful eyes at the distance, which was seething with battle.

We pitched our tents and ate our supper. It was a warm, calm evening. A dark, smoky cloud veiled the horizon, and the stars shone dimly. The fighting did not stop. In the night a thunder-storm burst upon us. The thunder rattled violently, and streaks of lightning cut through the air. And the projectiles continued to whistle by into the dark distance. The guns roared, interrupting the rumbling of the thunder. The rifle fire crackled feverishly and spasmodically. Heaven and earth blended together and whirled around in roaring, flashing madness. Through the sheets of rain dark columns of soldiers moved along the road, and the bayonets glittered in the flashes of lightning like streaks of fire.

Again a day, a second, and third, passed. The fighting continued, and we still stood packed up. What was this? Had they forgotten us? No. At Ugólnaya Station, on the sidings, everywhere, stood field hospitals, and they, too, were packed up. The surgeons yawned, almost died of ennui, and played cards.

It began to rain, and we moved from the tents to a Chinese farmhouse. We were crowded and uncomfortable, and the Sisters were placed in a corner of the room. At night they screened themselves from us with shawls. From Sultánov's hospital the surgeons and

the Sisters came to visit us, all except Sultánov's niece, Novítskaya, who never left her farmhouse. But Zinaída Arkádevna called on us very frequently. Elegantly attired, coquetting with her snow-white apron and red cross, she told us that the commander of such-and-such a division had dined with them, and that "our dear Sergyéy Pávlovich" (the Corps Commander) had visited them on such-and-such a day. Zinaída Arkádevna recalled Moscow and drew a deep sigh.

"Oh, Lord, how I would enjoy a chicken-pie just now!" she said, in her charming, affected drawl. "I am just crazy to have a bite of it!"

Selyukóv gloomily replied:

"Well, that isn't so terrible as yet, but just wait until the time when you will be crazy for a piece of black bread."

"Yes, a chicken-pie, and some champagne," Zinaída Arkádevna said, meditatively.

The conversation turned to the rumors that the hospital surgeons and the Sisters were about to be ordered to the dressing-stations.

"Well, you do not frighten me. I am a fatalist," Zinaída Arkádevna remarked. But it was only the evening before that our Sisters had laughingly told us how Zinaída Arkádevna and Novítskaya had been disturbed by these rumors, and had declared that, let others think what they might, they saw no reason for going right under fire.

Zinaída Arkádevna says good-bye and is about to walk off. In the corner, half-concealed in the shadow, sits our senior Sister.

"Oh, I haven't said good-bye to you! Good-bye!" Zinaída Arkádevna exclaims, good-naturedly.

"We are insignificant people; it is easy not to notice us," the Sister replies, reservedly.

"Not at all! You are always in uniform, in caps and dresses, so that you can be noticed at once. Not

at all like us revolutionaries," Zinaída Arkádevna replies, with a smile.

In our village and all around the village they were looting on a large scale. They gathered from the fields stacks of kao-liang, chumiz, and butter-beans, they dragged away from the Chinese everything they could lay their hands on. Excited Chinamen kept coming to us and begging us to protect them. We did what we could, but of course it was only a drop in the bucket. It was nobody's duty to protect the Chinese, the Chinese themselves were helpless, and the impunity of looting intoxicated and turned the soldiers' heads. One morning, upon arising, I heard under the window Russian and Chinese cries—the chief surgeon shouted hurriedly:

"Hold them, hold them!"

I jumped out of doors. The supervisor stood at the gate and angrily repeated:

"The devil take it! The devil take it!"

Across the field, over balks of kao-liang, were running the chief surgeon, a few of our soldiers, Chinamen, and an old Chinese woman, the proprietress of our farm. I ran after them.

From the Chinese graves two Cossacks were galloping, sheathing their sabres as they fled. Our soldiers were holding a pale artilleryman by the arm, and before them stood the chief surgeon. Near a conical grave a lean black sow lay panting. From under her left shoulder flowed dark blood.

"Oh, you, son-of-a-b——!" the chief surgeon cried, excitedly. "Have him arrested!"

We walked back. The Chinamen carried away the dying pig. The supervisor came up, and soldiers from our detachment gathered in a crowd.

"Where do you belong?" the chief surgeon asked sternly.

"To the Artillery Brigade," the prisoner replied.

On his frightened, pale face stood out a sandy mustache, and copious freckles, and the folds of his cloak were covered with blood. "Your Honor, permit me to tell you that it wasn't I. I only passed by. Just look at it!" He took his sword out of the sheath and showed it to the surgeon. "Please look at it. There is no blood on it."

"But how did it get the clay on it? Why did you take out your sword?"

"They asked me to help them."

"Who are they?"

"I can't tell you."

"Very well. Then you alone will be placed under arrest. Take him away! Arkádi Nikoláevich, make a report about him," Davýdov said, turning to the supervisor.

"Your Honor, please let me go. His Honor Captain Verévkin is waiting for me."

"Let him wait! I hope he did not send you out to steal! Rascals! Worse than robbers! Do you not know that the Chinamen are peaceable people and that no one is allowed to rob them?"

The half-butchered pig lay at the gate, and our soldiers crowded around it.

"Gee, but she's lean! It wasn't worth the while!" Kucherénko drawled out. "If she had only been fat!"

All looked sympathetically at the prisoner. He was taken away, and the soldiers scattered.

"Superb! That's the way it ought to be done!" I purposely said in a loud voice. "This will be a lesson to others!"

"'A lesson?' How can we help robbing?" a hostler replied, sourly. "All our horses would starve, and there would be no fuel with which to start the fires. You see the horses over there, eating rice straw? It's all stolen! The horses are furnished two pecks of oats,

and no horse can get enough out of that!. They will all starve!"

"Let them starve!" said I. "That's none of your business! That is the business of the authorities. All you have to do is to feed the horses, and not to supply the provender."

The soldier smiled.

"Yes, sir. When, during the march, the wagons stuck in the river, we were all driven into the water to help the horses out. How many of us men got the fever! Why? Because the horses had no strength. No, Your Honor, you are wrong about it. No swiping, no eating!"

"The senior surgeon is scolding the artilleryman and says that he will have him court-martialled," another remarked. "But what did he tell us? Grab, boys, says he, all you can, only see to it that I don't notice it! Why does he not threaten us with the court-martial?"

"It's good business for him, if we loot. For example, let me get into the hands of the captain who sent that artilleryman here. He would immediately say: 'Oh, you robber, son-of-a-b——! Do you not know that they are peaceable citizens? Court-martial him!'"

The soldiers laughed and I was silent, because they were in the right.

Our landlord, a young Chinaman with a fine, sunburnt face, thanked the chief surgeon warmly for his protection, and presented him with a pair of exquisitely embroidered Chinese slippers. Davýdov laughed, patted the Chinaman on his shoulder, and said, "Shango (good)!" In the evening, our clerk told us, he asked the landlord to sign his name to a paper. In this paper it said that the signer had sold to our hospital so many puds of kao-liang seed and rice straw, having received in full such and such a sum. The Chinaman was frightened and began to refuse.

"Very well, then don't sign your own name, sign any other name; it doesn't make any difference," said the chief surgeon.

This the Chinaman agreed to do, and he received, as a reward, a ruble, while our office was enriched by means of an "auditing document" to the sum of 617 rubles, 75 kopeks—forged documents are not fond of round numbers.

With every day the looting in our village assumed greater proportions. The soldiers and Cossacks carried off the candlesticks and censers from the shrine, and smashed the clay gods. It was rumored that the hearts of the gods were made of gold, and the soldiers were trying to find these golden hearts. From the farmhouses and yards they carried off frames, boxes, ploughs and doors, with which to start their fires. The Chinamen, in despair, let it all be done, did not run for help, and did not close their gates. Like bronze figures, they silently stood at the doors and looked at the entering and leaving looters.

They brought to our village from the positions three Hung-hu-tzüs. At daybreak the dragoons took them behind the fence and cut their heads off. Our landlord informed us that these three Chinamen were not Hung-hu-tzüs at all, but peasants from a neighboring village, and "heap good" men. Their capital punishment had a powerful effect upon the Chinamen. Their faces became even more dispassionate and more immovable, and next morning they all disappeared from the village. Our landlord, too, went off with his old mother. His wife and children had been sent to Mukden before our arrival.

On leaving, he smiled politely and kindly as ever, listening and trying to understand what he was being told. He went away with the old woman, taking only the most precious things with him. But even before his departure our soldiers had been rummaging through



that half of the house which they occupied. When the Chinese left, the soldiers filled the farmhouse like flies in a glass trap. To our remonstrances the supervisor answered that he was under no obligation to protect the property of those who had left, that they had turned nothing over to him, and that he had no guards for protection. Indeed, there was nothing that could be said against it.

The soldiers swarmed in the farmhouse all day. In the vestibule, between clay vats, called "kanha," lay all kinds of lumber, cups, and a queer looking hatchet. On the floor of the house lay trunks and cupboards which had been broken open by the soldiers, and a red, carved image-box, which had been torn from under some idols on the wall.

A sentry, who had just done duty, entered the farmhouse, wearing a Chinese cotton cloak over his overcoat. These cloaks took the place of fur jackets, which had not yet been provided for the soldiers.

"Boys, you had better look under ground, in the cellars," he advised our soldiers; and, noticing me, he sternly added, "Maybe guns are concealed there."

A soldier merrily dropped down from the loft, throwing a whole mass of Chinese slippers on the floor. The other soldiers began to carry them off. Some went into the yard and dug up a dirt-heap near the fence. They found a door to the cellar, and from there they fetched a chaff-cutter and a spade, and hurriedly began to throw the dirt back on the door.

"There is nothing more there," they said purposely, in loud voices, but it was obvious that they intended to come later, in order to rummage through the cellar at their ease.

At dusk I again entered the farmhouse. Nobody was there. The clay vat had for some reason been turned upside down and smashed, and in the vestibule stood clotted puddles of leavened kao-liang. Every-

where could be seen white fragments of broken dishes, and torn nets and seines. It made me sad to look at it: all this trash was hardly worth anything, but it had cost so much labor to get it together, and now that it was all destroyed it would cost no end of labor to replace it.

The sky was clear. Venus shone brightly in the west. Tall, stately poplars rose behind the fence. A cricket quietly chirped in a black crack of the oven, from which the kettle had been removed. In the field were the homeless dogs. All about us was calm ruin and pensive decline. The air began to take on a silvery sheen in the moonlight, and the poplars stood motionless. One could not help thinking what a peaceful life the exiles had been living here. On the doorposts were the strange, colored figures of the entrance gods, and the vertical strips of paper with the queer inscriptions. I remembered how, during the march, a Chinaman had explained to me the inscription, as saying:

“Good to speak.”

On the first of October we received the order to pitch the hospital at once and prepare for the reception of the wounded. The work went on all day long. They placed three enormous tents, filled the mattresses with straw, and organized the operating-room and the drug-store.

Next evening they brought the first transport of the wounded, during a pouring rainstorm. They took the wet, shivering, bleeding men out of the shaky two-wheeled carts, and carried them into the tents. Our soldiers, who were tired of inactivity, worked joyfully and with a vim. They gently raised the wounded, placed them on the litters, and carried them into the tents.

They brought in a soldier wounded by a Shimose shrapnel. His face was like a mass of bloody flesh,

both his hands were crushed, and his whole body was burned. Those who were wounded in the abdomen were groaning. On the straw lay a young soldier with a childish face, whose hip was broken. When they touched him, he began to weep pitifully and captiously, like a little child. In the corner sat a warrant-officer who had been hit by three bullets. He had been lying for three days in the field, and it was only to-day they had picked him up. With glistening eyes the warrant-officer told excitedly how their regiment had made an attack on a Japanese village.

"No firing was heard from the village. The regimental commander said: 'Boys, the little Jap has lost courage. He has run away from the village. Let us go and occupy it!' We advanced in chains. The commander scolded, 'Line up, you rabble! Don't run ahead!' They took it into their heads to drill us and to shout, and they just sent the shivers through us! And Brother Jap took an aim and began to warm us up. The dust was raised all about us, and men began to fall. The colonel raised his head, and peered through his glasses, while they were pouring it on us. 'Well, boys, move forward to an attack!' And he himself turned his horse around and galloped away!"

Our soldiers listened eagerly and heaved sighs.

"Everybody was running. I fell. Near me lay a countryman of mine. He tried to raise himself, but he fell down again. 'My friend,' says he, 'lift me up.' But what could I do? I couldn't raise myself!"

It was like twilight in the tent; the lamps burned dimly. Groans and sobs rose everywhere. The Sisters gave tea to the wounded. We tightened the blood-soaked bandages, and where necessary put on new ones. There were no more bandages. I sent to the drug-store of the tent-supervisor for some. The messenger returned with the report that the apothecary would not give out any without a written request. I asked a Sis-

ter to go to the drug-store and tell the apothecary that I would write out the request later, but that he should, in the meanwhile, furnish the bandages at once. The Sister went away and, upon returning, shrugged her shoulders in surprise, and informed me that the apothecary refused to give them without a written request.

Our apothecary was an unusually unintelligent man and a drunkard; but he produced the effect of a very kind and dear fellow. What had happened to him? We later learned to know him better: the drug-store was for him, as it were, the central mechanism of the world, and in its sacred movement nothing could be changed, even by a hair's breadth. Usually meek and obliging, Mikhaïl Mikháýlovich became intoxicated in the drug-store from the height of his situation, and when he was intoxicated—no matter whether from brandy or from the consciousness of the importance of his drug-store—he became arrogant and haughty. I went myself to see him.

"Mikhaïl Mikháýlovich, my dear man, what makes you so unreasonable? Please let me have the bandages at once, for the wounded are losing blood."

"Take the trouble to make a written request," he answered, drily, with compressed lips.

"But what difference does it make to you whether the petition is written now or later? This is the third time I have requested the same thing from you."

"I don't know anything about that. I can furnish things from the drug-store only by written request." In his voice I could hear the cold malice of a Russian official who felt in himself the right to do something nasty.

"The devil take it! Give me paper, and I will write it out!"

"I have no paper to spare! Get some from the senior surgeon! I myself get the paper only upon writ-

ten request and am obliged to render account of it. Yes, sir, no trifling now!"

It became necessary to have recourse to the chief surgeon, in order to check the apothecary's overzealous relation to his work.

We were busy with the wounded until late into the night. We had two cases for amputation. We extracted from the buttocks of an artilleryman the distance tube of a shrapnel, a broad copper cone, which had shattered the buttocks, and had torn the colon. In the night a new transport of wounded arrived. In the distance roared the cannon, and the dark heavens burst as if into sheet-lightning from the reflections of the discharges. Everywhere blood-stained, freezing men groaned. A soldier whose cheek and jaws a bullet had smashed, sat with his beard blackened with gore, and spat stringy clots of blood. Over the head of the surgeon who leaned down to him shook in even motion the tense fingers of the hands that were quivering in fear, and long drawn out sobs were heard.

"Oh, good saints!"

And in the distance the reflections of roaring discharges still glistened, and it was terrible to perceive the sensation which drew one on to the frightful enchantment of what was taking place there. But there was no enchantment—everything was wretched, gory and criminal.

In the morning the order came to transport the wounded men immediately to the sanitary train. What was that for? We were all perplexed. There were not a few who had been wounded in the abdomen or in the head, and for them the most important and necessary thing was rest. Now we had to lift them up, load them on shaky two-wheeled carts, drive them half a verst to the station, there again unload them, and transfer them to the sanitary train.

Our hospitals began to work, and our work was still more senseless than our previous inactivity.

From the dressing-stations they kept bringing the wounded. We placed them in the tents, and changed the bandages that were soaked with blood. According to the time of day, we gave them dinner or tea, and in the evening we loaded them all on the carts, and drove them to the station. What use was there in stopping with us within half a verst of the station, when the wounded had already been driven five or six versts? It frequently happened that we merely examined the newly-brought wounded in the carts, and by virtue of our authority immediately sent them on to the station in the same carts. The chief surgeon did not object to this, but only persisted in demanding that the wounded that were brought in should be entered on the records and should be sent along with our tickets.

At the station we loaded the wounded on the sanitary train.

A train, glittering with royal magnificence, steamed up. The long white cars with their plate-glass windows looked clean and comfortable. The wounded, in snow-white linen, lay on soft spring mattresses. Sisters and surgeons were everywhere, and in a special car was the operating-room, the kitchen, and the laundry. The train went off, noiselessly swaying on soft springs, and its place was taken by another, which consisted exclusively of common, clumsy baggage cars. The doors were rolled aside, the wounded were dragged with difficulty into the high cars without steps, and were placed on the floor which had just been cleaned of manure. There were no stoves, and no toilet-rooms. The cars were cold and ill-smelling. The severely wounded evacuated under themselves. Those who could, rushed out of the cars and dragged themselves to the toilet-room of the station. The train whistled, jerked

mightily, and the cars began to move. The wounded were jolted about on the floor, where they crouched, groaning and cursing. There was no communication between the cars. If a hemorrhage started, the wounded man died before the train-surgeon could reach him at the next stop.

Here is what Dr. B. Kozlowski tells in the *Russian Surgeon* (1905, No. 5) about the transportation of the wounded during the Sha-ho Battle:

"The transported soldiers suffered severely from cold, the more so since they had not been furnished with any warm clothing, and only a few could obtain warm Chinese covers and clothes in Mukden, and even these were far from sufficient. In order to keep themselves warm, the transported soldiers made fires in some of the cars, over bricks and so forth; but that was an exception. For the most part, the trains were despatched without any arrangements, without kitchens, without candles, without any classification of the sick, and almost without any medical personnel. Thus one of the trains arrived in Harbin in charge of only one officer and one Sister. There were trains that travelled all night in the dark, on account of the lack of candles, and that proceeded for several stations without any medical personnel, which was provided for only at Tieh-ling. Nor was it any better with the feeding of the sick. It was necessary to feed the transported soldiers at the military provision stations, but here a whole series of misunderstandings took place: now an inexperienced commander had failed to send off a telegram in time, now a train was several hours late; and in consequence, the patients frequently went without warm food for two days at a time, and starved in cold, unheated cars. The nearer to Harbin, the more obstructed the road became, and the more did the transports freeze and starve."

In the same *Russian Surgeon* (No. 14) is given

the account of a surgeon, which refers to the period of the Liao-yang battle: "One night he heard some groans proceeding from a hermetically closed car. Upon opening the car, he saw there a man who had been wounded in the head, in a dazed condition, and who had torn off the bandage. The wounded man stood at the window of the baggage-car and with his fingers picked clots of crushed brain out of the wound, and examined them in the moonlight; while on the floor in the darkness lay men wounded in the abdomen, with incipient peritonitis, who, at every jolt of the car, burst into loud groans and curses. There was a stench in the car from the evacuations under the wounded. The closeness and thirst increased the sufferings of the unfortunate men. Apparently the groans of the transported soldiers were heard in St. Petersburg, for, towards the end of August, persons were collecting material about the transportation, and, as a result, there appeared a report and attempts to improve said transportation."

During the Sha-ho Battle, as we saw, these "attempts" had not yet been crowned with success, and everything was done as of old. Here is what took place at the meeting of the Tieh-ling Medical Society, as late as January, 1905, not long before the Mukden Battle:

"The communication of N. V. Réno, about the transportation of the wounded and sick in heated cars, was received. The lady who made the report described in vivid colors the torments suffered by the sick who were transported in these trains, and pointed out the humiliating situation of the medical personnel accompanying them, for they were almost impotent in their struggle with the mass of disorders presented by the trains in their present condition. During the exchange of opinions, in which the engineers also took part, it became clear that, in spite of a year of war, almost nothing had been done for the improvement of these



trains, although these improvements were possible at a comparatively small cost, and with the local means of the railway shops. For an all-sided consideration of ways and means, necessary for a satisfactory introduction of improvements in the heated sanitary trains, the Society appointed a commission, in whose labors the engineers kindly promised to take part. The data collected by this commission, and the project of a reconstruction of the car, which had been offered by the engineer Savkévich, were sent to the Chief of the Sanitary Division of the Army by a vote of the Society. 'I do not find it convenient to dwell here,' adds the writer of the article, 'on the unexpected results of this report.' " (*The Russian Surgeon*, 1905, No. 25.)

The result was very simple. From the Chief of the Sanitary Division, General F. F. Trépov, there came, instead of an answer, the inquiry on what basis the Tieh-ling Medical Society existed. The reply was that it existed on the basis of a decree, confirmed by the Chief of the Rear Army, General Nadárov, and establishing the Harbin Medical Society, of which the Tieh-ling Society was a branch. Let me remark parenthetically that the existence of the Tieh-ling Society had long been known to Trépov. The society had earlier written to him of the necessity of establishing at Tieh-ling an isolation building for contagious patients, but to this no answer had been received.

A second paper was received from the Chief of the Sanitary Division, to the effect that the authority of General Nadárov did not extend to Tieh-ling. This was the end of the affair.

All around us, at the stations and on the sidings, field hospitals stood everywhere. Some of them had not yet received the order to unpack. Others, like ours, were already established. From a distance the enormous canvas tents with bright green ridges could

be seen, while Red Cross flags provokingly flapped in the wind.

"What are you men really doing?" I asked the surgeons of these hospitals.

"What are we doing? Why, we register the wounded who pass," the physicians answered, with a smile. "We continually get telegrams to send them on immediately. Those who are registered get their allowances, and the allowances for the lower ranks are sixty kopeks a day, while those for an officer are one rouble and twenty kopeks. The supervisors walk around, rubbing their hands."

Thus did the hospitals work in our locality. But in the Mukden stone barracks, which we had turned over to the hospitals of the Second Division of our Corps, the following was going on meanwhile:

Wounded men were brought to the barracks in an uninterrupted stream. It was as though a dam had given way. They brought new patients continually. They came walking, even those who were wounded in the abdomen. Through all the doors men with blood-stained bandages poured in. In one of the buildings there were three hundred cots; in another, one hundred and eighty. Now more than a thousand wounded were crowded in each of them,—not only was there no sufficiency of cots, but there had long existed an insufficiency of straw and mattings, or even a free space under a roof. The wounded lay on the floor between the cots, in the aisles and vestibules of the barracks, and filled the hospital tents, which were pitched nearby. And yet there was not room for all. They lay in the open, in the rain and wind, blood-stained, shivering, and wet through, and the cold air was filled with their quivering groans.

The "specially attached" surgeons, who, when we were there, crowded the barracks without any work, had now all been sent by Gorbatsévich to the various

regiments. They all left in Swedish tunics, without overcoats. Gorbatsévich simply would not allow them to go to Harbin and fetch their belongings. The whole enormous work in the two Mukden barracks was now done by eight regular surgeons. They worked without interruption, day and night, barely able to stand on their legs. And they kept bringing in new wounded.

There were not enough kettles in the kitchens. As many as there were, they were all filled with boiling soup, on the assumption that the hungry wounded would want to eat; but the majority of those who arrived begged for something to drink, rather than something to eat. They turned away from the hot, salty soup, and begged for water. There was no water; there was no place to prepare boiled water, and unboiled water could not be given to them, because all about raged dysentery and intestinal typhoid.

So what were these Mukden barracks doing?

They, too, were transporting, and that was all. And this was even more curious than with us. They transported not only the wounded who had been brought directly from the positions; but also the wounded who arrived from the south on the heated sanitary trains, who were unloaded at Mukden and transferred to the barracks, in order to be hauled back to the station next day, loaded into heated cars, and transported further on. One might have thought that some malicious devil had purposely arranged it so, in order to rejoice at the immeasurable human suffering. But no, the devil was not malicious, and had no desire to rejoice; he had a dry, dispassionate, paper soul, an eye for bustle and business, and he supposed that he was doing the right thing.

Telegrams kept arriving in the barracks from the military medical authorities: "Transport four hundred men immediately," "Transport seven hundred men immediately." In the clutches of some incomprehen-

ble, mad delirium, the authorities thought only of one thing, namely, how to get the wounded as far away from the position as possible. The Sha-ho Battle did not end with a retreat of the army—never mind! it *might* end with a retreat—and so the heavily wounded, who above all needed rest, were, for days at a time, loaded on cars, unloaded again, dragged from place to place, shaken up and jolted in two-wheeled carts and heated baggage cars.

At the conclusion of the battle, Kuropátkin, with a feeling of great satisfaction, sent a despatch to the Minister of War, to be transmitted to the Tsar:

“During the engagements from September 25 to October 8, there were transferred from the field of action of the Manchurian Army to Mukden, and hence transported to the Rear: wounded and sick officers, 945; lower ranks, 31,111. The transportation of so considerable a number of wounded took place in so brief a time, thanks to the energy, activity, and co-operation of the members of the Sanitary and Medical Departments.”

All the wounded were unanimous in their statements that the wounds were not nearly so terrible as the transportation in these hellish carts and cars. Those who suffered from internal wounds perished in them like flies. Fortunate was a man with an abdominal injury, who for three or four days wallowed on the field of battle and was not picked up: he lay there without aid and alone, suffered thirst and cold, and at any moment packs of dogs might attack him,—but he had his so necessary rest. When he was picked up, the intestinal wounds had closed up to a certain extent, and he was out of danger.

Disobeying the direct commands of the authorities, the surgeons of the Mukden barracks, at their own risk, set aside a part of the building for patients with internal wounds, and did not send them on. The result

was striking: every one of the twenty-four men got well,—only one suffered from limited peritonitis, and one from suppurating pleuritis. But both improved.

Towards the end of the battle, the viceroy made a visit to the barracks, and distributed St. Georges to the wounded soldiers. After the viceroy's departure, everybody giggled, and his adjutants confusedly swung their arms and confessed that, to tell the truth, all these crosses should be taken back.

Here comes the viceroy, followed by his suite. On a cot lies a pale soldier, over his abdomen an enormous hoop, and on the abdomen some ice.

"How were you wounded?"

"You see, sir, I was walking, Your Excellency, when suddenly, bang! she hit me straight in the belly. I don't remember, I don't remember what!"

The viceroy pins a St. George on him, but who was that *she*? A Shimose? Oh, no! A baggage-cart. It was overturned on the slope of a hill, and crushed the driver. He had not even smelt powder.

The St. George was given to soldiers who had been wounded in the back, while in flight. For the most part, soldiers who lay near the aisles received the decoration. Those who lay farther away towards the wall remained unrewarded. However, there was one who did get a reward. He was convalescing, and he was told that in a few days he would be sent to the convalescent ward. The soldier pushed his way through the wounded men to the aisle, stood at attention before the viceroy, and exclaimed:

"Your Excellency, please have me transferred to the line. I want to serve my Tsar and country more."

The viceroy looked at him benevolently.

"Let the doctors attend to the transfer! Meanwhile, take this."

And he pinned a St. George to his cloak.

I now had the chance to confirm the stories which

I had heard before as to the manner in which the crosses were distributed. One soldier received a St. George who, while drunk, had fallen under a train and had lost both his legs; and another, whose head had been split in a fight with his comrade. There were many more of this kind.

During the battle, as I have already said, four regular surgeons were working in every building of the barracks. When the fight was over, and the wave of the wounded subsided, the surgeons received the assistance of fifteen reserve surgeons from Harbin; but these had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do.

While the battle was going on, none of the superiors put in their appearance in the barracks; but now they began to visit it frequently. Again there were reprimands, threats of arrest, and confused, contradictory orders.

Gorbatsévich made his appearance.

"What is this? The patients' cloaks are lying on the beds!"

"There is no store-room, Your Excellency!"

"Then drive some nails over the beds and let them hang on nails!"

The nails were driven in. Later Trépov appeared.

"Is this a store-house? Why do you let these cloaks hang here? They cut off the light, and fill the room with dust and contagion!"

"But we were ordered to do so by the Medical Field Inspector."

"Take them away at once!"

Ezérski, the Inspector of Hospitals, did things in his own way. A young surgeon, but lately called from the reserve, was in charge for the day. He was sitting in the receiving room at a table, reading a paper. Ezérski entered and crossed the room once or twice. The surgeon looked at him and continued reading. Ezérski walked up and asked:

"How many sick have you?"

"How many sick? I'll see," the surgeon said, good-naturedly, stretching out his arm for the record of the patients.

"Please, you see that a stranger is walking up and down the hall, and you do not pay the least attention, but continue reading. Suppose I am a crazy man!"

The surgeon raised his brows, surveyed the general, and barely shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say that to look at him one could not tell.

The general was furious and began to shout. Then it occurred to the surgeon that it must be some superior that was standing before him, so he arose and stood at attention.

"You will go under arrest for a week!"

The orderly entered and, with his hand to his cap, said to the general:

"Pardon, Your Excellency, it is our fault. This comrade has just arrived from the reserve, and knows no military rules, and we have not told him anything."

"What! You take his part? Under arrest for three days!"

In Mukden the above-mentioned confusion took place, but we, in our village, without hurrying, received and despatched transports of the wounded. Fortunately for the wounded, the transport trains came less frequently to us. Again everybody was without work and nearly died of ennui. To the south, the guns roared as before, and rifle discharges were frequently heard. Several times Japanese projectiles began to fall and burst near our village.

One of our regular Sisters fell ill, and after her, one of the supernumeraries, an officer's wife. In Sul-tánov's hospital, pretty Vyéra Nikoláevna was sick. All three developed intestinal typhoid,—they had contracted it in Mukden, while attending the sick. The

sick Sisters were transported to the sanitary train in Harbin.

In our village was stationed the staff of one infantry division. To this staff they kept bringing under convoy from the positions Chinamen who were tied to each other by their queues; and right near this village their heads were chopped off. From all sides came uncertain, agitating rumors about the Chinamen's treachery. It was said that they sneaked in among the positions, signalled the Japanese from the roofs, from trees, and from craters, and that they shot at our transports of wounded and at the retreating armies. It was impossible to see how it was done, but in the most important places, our telegraph and telephone connections were broken.

In these stories there was much that was true: signalling Chinamen had frequently been caught red-handed. Under the Chinese garment of a vagrant sleight-of-hand performer was discovered a Japanese spy with a loose queue attached to him. The Japanese knew, with amazing precision, the disposition of all our parts, and all our transportations. There was created the sensation of treason secretly crawling all around us, and every Chinaman aroused suspicion. From this grew something monstrous which would be ludicrous if it were not so terrible.

In a neighboring village, a Chinaman climbed with a sheaf of kao-liang on the roof of his farmhouse, in order to patch up a hole. The sheaf glistened in the air, a Cossack saw it, and the Chinaman, with a bullet through him, rolled down from the roof. About three versts ahead of us, one of our mortar batteries was hidden beyond a grove. The Japs could not trace it, since they did not suspect that it was located so close to them. Accidentally a few Chinamen who had come from Mukden to fetch some supplies from their village, passed by that battery. They were all caught



and cut to pieces. Hired Chinamen brought the wounded from the positions to our hospital. When ready to return, they asked of us for some "wryty-wryty" (written notes), else they were afraid that the soldiers would say that they were Hung-hu-tzüs and would chop off their heads. Indeed, both at Sha-ho and Liao-yang a number of Chinamen who had been hired by the Russians for the transportation of the wounded, had been killed by them as being spies.

More than one Chinaman fell as a victim of the heliograph. The majority of our soldiers knew absolutely nothing about the heliograph and about its use in the Russian Army. Somewhere in the distance are the misty, blue mountains, and on a crater there begins to flash a small fire. After two or three minutes of such flashing it again dies down. In the neighboring village suddenly a blindingly bright, intermittent light glitters somewhere amidst the trees, and above the roofs, and again a little fire flashes ominously on the distant blue crater. Everybody is seized with an agitated sensation of mystery and treason, and with the desire to do or to prevent something.

I happened to be out riding with an officer, an acquaintance of mine. Two heliographic sappers were working on the roof of a Chinese farmhouse. We stopped to watch them. Suddenly broken twigs began to fall from a tree, bullets whistled in the air, and the sappers flew headlong from the roof. Cossacks galloped at full speed into the village.

"Two Chinamen have been giving signals with mirrors from the roof. We have shot one, and the other has jumped down and run away. Did you not notice where he went?"

"Scoundrels! Sons-of-b——! Did you get dust into your eyes? You have been shooting at us," the sappers cried in rage at the embarrassed Cossacks.

The officers of the sappers told me that the China-

men had more than once suffered severely at the hands of the Cossacks and soldiers of those villages where the heliograph was working.

Everywhere frightful blunders, which never could be corrected, occurred from various causes. Once the commander of our corps rode through a Chinese village. From the corner of a clay fence two shots were fired in succession apparently at the general. The Cossacks of the convoy rushed around the corner, cut two Chinamen to pieces, and captured five others. A few days later the captives were killed and buried near the bank of the brook. The rains washed down the banks and the legs in their blue trousers and black slippers over white socks stuck out from the clay. Much later I learned most confidentially from one of the staff officers that after the execution of the Chinamen it had turned out that it was not they who had been doing the shooting, and that the shots had not been directed at the general. Two Cossacks, who had come to the village, had been hunting a Chinese pig. The pig had crossed the road, and the Cossacks were shooting at it; and in their hurry, they did not observe the carriage of the general that was coming around the corner. They saw that they were in a fix, and so they galloped away, and the local Chinese peasants paid the penalty for them. Later these Cossacks themselves told of it to the Cossacks of the convoy. The general gave the strictest order not to say a word about the misunderstanding that had taken place.

When everything around you is dark, when your soul is filled with anxious suspicion, mistakes are so easily committed! And they are bitter, terrible mistakes! Everybody looked upon these blunders with unperturbed equanimity. But what is to be done? Who can make out what is what? There is not time to bother about these things. Amidst the close-cropped

heads with white faces, there were some yellow-faced men with long queues, and the lives of these yellow-faced men were cheaper than a filip of the fingers. Nobody demanded an account from the killing of a yellow man. One was allowed to take such a man's life by mistake, simply because one felt like swishing one's sword. A sanguinary mist rose, and veiled and intoxicated the soul, and helplessness, like a naked woman with hands tied behind her, drew on to itself and awakened desire. Here, before you, is a man, something precious and inviolable—but if you have the desire, just strike him with your sabre or shoot him with your gun!

A detachment of Circassians rode into a Chinese village from the right wing. The Chinamen surrounded them and gazed at the strange sight. Suddenly the Circassians drew their sabres and began to strike right and left, men, women, and children. What for? They explained it very simply!

"They were in our way!"

Cossacks were ordered to take to the staff such of the Chinamen as had been caught at a position. If the Chinamen were sent with a written order, the Cossacks promptly delivered them. But if there were no written order, they proceeded in a much more simple way. "What's the use of bothering with them?" They would take them into the kao-liang field, kill them with their sabres, and cover their bodies with kao-liang.

If any misunderstanding arose between the soldiers stationed in the villages and their Chinese landlords, the soldiers would threaten them something like this:

"Say another word, and we'll go and tell the captain that you have threatened a soldier with a knife, and off will go your head!"

I was once out riding. In the gutter by the roadside lay two Chinamen, apparently dead. Both were covered with blood, and one of them seemed to be still

breathing heavily and slowly. The passers-by stopped, looked a while, and calmly rode on. The horses pricked up their ears, snorted wildly, and shied to one side. Men looked on with the strange curiosity of loafers,—in their souls there was no agitation, there was not that eternal fear of the destruction of life,—the life of a long-haired yellow man was no longer felt as life.

Soon everything became even more mixed up, and in the very depths of Russia, white men in the same way ceased to feel the life of one another.

Our village was being destroyed day by day. The farmhouses stood doorless and without window-sashes, and from many of them the thatches had been carried off. The clay walls rose amidst deserted yards covered with bits of broken vessels. There were no Chinamen in the village. The dogs had left the farms, where now strangers were living, and hungry and wild, they raced over the fields in large packs.

In a neighboring village a sick old Chinese woman was lying in a miserable clay hut. Her son had remained with her. He was unable to take her away, because the Cossacks had driven off his mule. The window-sashes had been torn down for fire-wood, the doors had been taken off, the furniture burned, and all the supplies carried away. They suffered from hunger and cold in their ruined farmhouse. Suddenly the terrible news reached us that the son had, with his own hands, cut his mother's throat and left the village.

Our landlord returned from Mukden. When he saw his looted house, he sighed and shook his head. With his terrible, sweetly-polite smile, he walked towards the cellar door, which had been wrenched off, let himself down into the cellar, glanced around there, and came out again. His immovable face expressed nothing. In the evening the Chinaman sat

with the surgeon's assistant on the trunk of a tree which had been cut down by us in his garden. With a voice of curiosity, he asked the assistant:

"Fliend, you have a madam?"

"I have," answered the assistant.

"Little children have?" the Chinaman asked again, pointing about a foot from the floor.

"I have."

The assistant heaved a sigh and fell to musing. The Chinaman, in a quiet, dispassionate voice, told him that he, too, had a madam and three children, and that they all lived in Mukden. Mukden was swarming with Chinamen who had run away from the villages occupied by the Russians. Everything had risen in price, for a corner in a farmhouse they asked ten rubles a month, a "stick" of onions cost a kopek, and a pud of kao-liang, one ruble and a half. But no money was to be had.

He sat with bent head, emaciated, with a fresh olive hue on his handsome face. The assistant gave him a piece of black bread. The Chinaman eagerly bit into the bread with his crooked teeth.

From the well came our cook with a four-cornered black bucket in his hand.

"Good morning, fliend!" he merrily shouted to the Chinaman.

The Chinaman politely answered with a nod of his head.

"Good morning!" And with a meek smile he pointed at the bucket.

"Eh? Is this your bucket?"

"Mine," said the Chinaman, smiling.

"How did you manage to make your way to this village?" the assistant asked. "They have deported all the Chinamen from here. If you go back, you'll fall into the hands of the Cossacks, and they'll chop your head off!"

"Me not afraid!" The Chinaman answered, with equanimity.

In the dusk of the evening he went away from the village, and we did not see him again.

At supper the chief surgeon, sighing, harangued as follows:

"Yes, if we are going to burn in the other world, I shall unquestionably get into a very hot frying-pan! Our landlord came to-day. Apparently he wanted to carry off the three sacks of rice which he had buried in the cellar, but our detachment had gotten away with them before. It is very likely that he counted on them, in order to keep from starving, whereas our soldiers have already eaten up the rice."

"Please, sir, you knew it. How could you have permitted it?" we asked.

The chief surgeon rolled his eyes.

"I found it out just now."

"It is all your own fault," Selyukóv said, harshly. "Not far from us is the division lazaretto. Its supervisor called together the detachment and announced to them that the first one whom he would catch looting, he would have court-martialled. And there has been no looting there. But, of course, he buys all the supplies and the fuel for the soldiers."

An "awkward silence" ensued. The servants stood at the doors with motionless faces, but their eyes laughed.

"There is in general nothing more shameful and contemptible than war," said the chief surgeon, with a sigh.

Everybody was silent.

"I believe that in time the East will cruelly revenge itself on Europe," continued the chief surgeon.

Æsthetic Shántser could not contain himself any longer, and began to talk of the yellow peril, of the famous picture of the German emperor.

After supper the servants laughingly told us that the chief surgeon had known about the sacks of rice from the very start. He had given twenty kopeks to each of the soldiers who had dug up the rice, and was now feeding his detachment with it.

That division lazaretto, of which Selyukóv had spoken, presented a remarkable, bright oasis amidst the heartless, bleak desert of our management in Manchuria. The cause of this extraordinary phenomenon was that the commander of the lazaretto and the supervisor were simple, honest men, who were not thinking of getting rich at the expense of the Chinamen. I happened to be in the village where this lazaretto was stationed. The village had an extraordinary, incredible appearance: the farmhouses and yards were untouched, the doors and windows were unbroken, the barns were filled with grain stacks. Chinese children gambolled in the streets and women fearlessly walked about; and the men had happy faces. The shrine was guarded by a sentry. Patrols marched through the streets by day and by night, and, to the great surprise of the strange soldiers and Cossacks who found their way to the village, mercilessly arrested the looters.

How different the relations of the Chinamen to the Russians were there! We sat for whole days without the very necessities, while in that village there was a superabundance of everything. The Chinamen seemed to get out of the earth absolutely everything that the Russians asked for. No one there was afraid of the Hung-hu-tzüs, and on the darkest nights all walked through the streets of the village unarmed.

Oh, those Hung-hu-tzüs, spies, signallers! How insignificant and few they would have been, how easy it would have been to get along with them, if the Russian Army had even distantly approached being that externally and morally disciplined army that it had been

represented in the newspapers, by lying, patriotic reporters!

The battle gradually and imperceptibly died down. Two enormous waves had spread out and had come in conflict and now were slowly receding. The two armies, with slight changes, remained in their places. The guns roared less frequently and more dully, and there were fewer wounded. Russians and Japanese sat opposite each other in rain-drenched trenches some three hundred feet apart, freezing, up to their knees in water, and huddling behind breastworks. Whoever incautiously peeped over, immediately received a bullet in his head. Into the hospitals there now flocked patients suffering from bronchitis, rheumatism, and fever.

Sprightly Zinaída Arkádevna came running in and announced to us that the capture of sixteen guns from the Japanese and the occupation of a crater was to be expanded into a superb victory, and that they were about to begin to consider peace.

This rumor began to spread. Some officers said reservedly:

"This is a most propitious moment for peace. We have maintained the position, and we can proceed to consider peace not as though we were beaten."

Others were provoked.

"How is that? It is perfectly clear that a crisis is taking place in the war. So far, we have been retreating, but now we have maintained our position. In the next battle, we will beat the Japs. Once they are beaten, they won't stop running until they reach the sea. The Cossacks will have plenty to do. The Japs have no more soldiers, while we are getting new supplies all the time. Winter is coming on, and the Japanese are used to a warm climate. Just wait and see how they will squeak in winter time!"

The majority of the officers were in agreement as to



the winter, but in general they kept quiet and did not express their opinions.

From those who had participated in the war from its very beginning, I later frequently heard that the general morale had reached its greatest height during the Liao-yang Battle. At that time everybody had faith in victory, and everybody believed without deceiving himself. At that time even those officers rushed into battle who, a few months later, swarmed into the hospitals at the first rumor of a fight. I no longer found that *elan*. While I was there, the morale slowly and continuously fell from month to month. Men clutched at anything, in order to save the last remnant of their faith.

At first they had said that the Japanese were born sailors, that we would beat them on land. Then they began to say that the Japanese were used to the mountains, that we would beat them in the plains. Now they said that the Japanese were used to the summer, and that we would beat them in the winter. And everybody tried to believe in the winter.

## CHAPTER V

### THE GREAT STAND: OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER

ONE evening both our hospitals received from the staff of the corps the order to move immediately from the village of Siao-kii-shinpu to the west, to the village Bei-tai-tsein. When this order was received, Sultánov's niece, Novitskaya, was, for some reason, very happy. The adjutant from the staff of the corps was then visiting them. While seeing him out, she was all beaming and asked him to deliver her great thanks to the Commander of the Corps.

The village of Bei-tai-tsein was only two versts from the village where we were stationed. In the morning our hospital moved away. In Sultánov's hospital they were only beginning to pack up; Sultánov was drinking coffee in bed.

Our chief surgeon took with him from the farmhouse everything which could be loaded on the wagon, —two tables, stools, four elegant red cupboards. He ordered the big kettle to be torn out of the stove in the vestibule. To our remonstrances he replied:

"They will loot it anyway. I will return it to them later."

We arrived at Bei-tai-tsein. It was a large village, with two long streets, but it was entirely deserted. The farmhouses were without their thatches, and the clay walls gaped with the black oblongs of open doors and windows, from which the wood had been removed for fuel. Only in one of the streets there was a row of large, well-to-do stone houses, which were entirely

untouched. At the gate of every house stood a sentry.

"Are these houses occupied by anybody?" the surgeon-in-chief asked the sentry.

"Yes, sir!"

"Who is stationed here?"

"The staff of the corps was stationed here. It was yesterday transferred to that village. Now Sultánov's movable field hospital will be stationed here."

"But who placed the sentry here?"

"The staff of the corps."

That was it. Now things became clear. We walked through the whole village. After much searching, the assistant of the supervisor found in one yard, near Sultánov's farmhouses, two miserable, small and dirty hovels. There were no other houses in which to be located. The soldiers bivouacked in the gardens; our servants cleaned and swept the hovels, and pasted up the torn windows with paper.

We went to examine the farmhouses which were kept for Sultánov. The rooms were clean, spacious, and luxurious. The sentries told us that for three days before the arrival of the Corps Commander a whole company of sappers had been fixing up these apartments. Now it became obvious why Novítskaya was so happy upon the receipt of the order and why she had sent her thanks to the Corps Commander. And all this senseless transposition of the hospitals for the short distance of two versts also became obvious. In the other village the whole personnel of Sultánov's hospital had been, like ourselves, crowded into one house, and that, of course, did not please Novítskaya. The incredible question arose whether it was possible that hundreds of men were so easily swept from one place to another at the beck and call of one thin, white finger of Sister Novítskaya. Later on, we had frequent occasions to convince ourselves that in this finger there was an enormous fairy power.

The servants drove a wagon loaded with our things into the small yard, and began to carry the belongings into the houses which they had cleaned up. At the gate of our yard appeared the stately figure of Sultánov astride a white horse.

"Look here! Whose belongings are these? Yours?" he shouted at Dr. Grechíkhin.

"Yes, sir."

"Be so kind as to take them away. All these are our houses."

"Those houses over there are yours. Nobody told us that these are occupied."

"But I do tell you! Oh, there! Don't take the things in!" Sultánov shouted to our servants.

Shántser and I were standing at the gate. Shántser, who was always remarkably indifferent to how things were fixed for him, looked with merry curiosity at Sultánov. Novítskaya and Zinaída Arkádevna hurriedly walked up to the gate.

Novítskaya, angry and excited, attacked Shántser.

"These are our farmhouses. You had no right to occupy them. The general had left them for us, and our sentry was standing here. You thought, because you were the first to arrive, that you could grab anything!"

She excitedly showered abuse on him. One could only hear rapid, malicious: "Tet-tet-tet——!"

Suddenly all her exquisite languor disappeared, and before our eyes officiously flitted a contemptible, vulgar being, with a small head and an ugly turkey face.

"Why do you address me? I have absolutely nothing to do with it," Shántser replied carelessly, shrugging his shoulders.

"It is true, Novítskaya. What has Moiséy Grigórevich to do with it?" Zinaída Arkádevna remarked, reservedly.

Novítskaya broke off, and both hurried off to their houses.

Our chief surgeon arrived. He ordered the servants to continue carrying the belongings into the house. Sultánov turned and addressed him in his indolent, careless voice:

"It would be far better if we divided the village in two. We shall take this street, and you that one."

"Much obliged! Had we not better do it the other way?" answered Davýdov, with difficulty suppressing his annoyance. "To say the least, I should be ashamed to place even dogs in those houses!"

Ultimately, matters were somehow arranged. We took up residence in our farmhouse, and unpacked our things. Suddenly Zinaída Arkádevna appeared in our yard, with the warrant-officer who was in charge of the sentry. She walked through the yard, sharply examining everything.

"Here was the field telegraph, eh? Then this building is ours, too? Then why did you not tell them?"

"Madam, I was commanded to guard only those buildings over there."

"No, this one, too. And don't lie to me, please. The general himself told me so, and he pointed it out to me. You are a fine commander of the guards! I'll send in a complaint of you to the Corps Commander!"

She went away with him to the gate of her farmhouse. A minute later the warrant-officer, saluting, came up to Davýdov, who was busy watching the construction of the hospital tents.

"Your Excellency, please have your houses vacated," he said, respectfully. "Else I shall be responsible before the commander."

The chief surgeon burst out like a flash.

"You tell your commander," he said, emphasizing every word, "that I have occupied these farmhouses by force. Begone!"

Another soldier came running from Sultánov, to announce that there had been a misunderstanding and that Sultánov had farmhouses enough. Shántser was elated at the answer of our chief surgeon.

"Superb, superb," he repeated. "For this answer much may be forgiven him!"

The Sultánov people established themselves with complete comfort.

Sultánov himself, Novítskaya, and Zinaída Arkádevna each took a roomy apartment. A separate apartment was given to the four junior surgeons, and a separate one to the housekeeping staff. We took up our quarters pell-mell in the clay hovels of our two small, dirty farmhouses. In the evening the carriage of the Corps Commander and the jaunting-car of his adjutant, who had brought to Sultánov an invitation to sup with the Corps Commander, stood in front of Sultánov's gate. Sultánov appeared, together with prinked-up, perfumed Novítskaya and Zinaída Arkádevna: they seated themselves in the carriage and drove to the neighboring village. In the yard the sentry duty was done by Sultánov's cook, who had spoiled the cake for the dinner.

We had the tents pitched for the patients, but it was already getting very cold at night. The chief surgeon discovered a few farmhouses which were in a less ruinous condition than the rest, and he began to fix them up for the patients. The carpenters and plasterers of our detachment worked for three days on these houses.

The buildings were ready, and we were about to transfer the sick from the tents. Suddenly a new order came, which was to transport the sick to the sanitary train, without delay to break camp, and to go to the village of Su-ya-tun, while Sultánov's hospital was to proceed to another village. We again

drew a sigh of relief: thank God, we would be away from Sultánov!

Next morning at daybreak we started. Our whole corps was being moved from the right flank to the centre. Along the roads the columns of infantry, the baggage-trains, the batteries and the parks moved in close masses. We kept stopping constantly.

During one such stop, we fell in with a number of Chinamen who were tied to one another by their queues. About them marched armed soldiers in caps with white borders. They sat down on some hillocks to rest.

"What kind of Chinamen are these?" we asked the members of the convoy.

"Naturally, Hung-hu-tzüs!"

The Chinamen sat silently. At every motion their tied queues were stretched. One of them, a very young man, looked curiously aside; another drooped his lower lip; a third sat with an indifferent, concentrated expression on his face.

Two artillery men walked up to them.

"Oh! Heap know you!" they exclaimed, nodding their heads to a grey-haired Chinaman.

The Chinaman had a thin braid, and his sparse grey beard came to a point; his bleared, red-rimmed eyes were teary, and under his nose was a wet spot. He was squatting, showing his worn teeth and blinking in the sun. It looked as though he were smiling.

"Do you know him?" I asked the artillerymen.

"Certainly. He is from the village where we were located. They had orders to have the Chinese deported, but his old wife had just died. He stealthily came back with his two sons, in order to bury the old woman. We used to give him bread frequently."

"They went out to catch him and his sons, and they found six others," one of the convoy said, with a sigh. "The captain told us to take them to the

staff of the division, but where are we to find it? Nobody knows where it is!"

We arrived in the village of Su-ya-tun. It lay a quarter of a mile to the east of the station. As usual, it was half in ruin, but the Chinamen had not yet been deported. Beyond the low clay fences flat flails and heads with the black queues bound around could be seen: everywhere the Chinese were hurriedly threshing the kao-liang and chumiz.

We, the junior surgeons, succeeded in finding a small farmhouse which had been abandoned by the Chinese, where we took separate quarters. This was a great relief, not to be obliged to see eternally before our eyes the chief surgeon and the supervisor.

Towards evening the band of Chinamen who were tied by their queues, entered the village from the east. About them marched armed soldiers, in caps with white borders.

"Your Honor, can you not tell us where the staff of the division is?"

"I do not know. Are you the men we talked with this morning beyond the railway?"

The soldiers recognized me.

"Just so, sir."

"Have you been marching all this time?"

"Yes, sir, since five in the morning. Nobody can tell us where to go!"

The soldiers looked hungry, and their faces were worn and tense. The Chinese looked about them with indifference and equanimity: the closely-knotted queues did not allow them to turn their heads. In order to feel more comfortable they tried to stand with their backs against each other.

We filled them all with bread and tea, and at dusk they trudged on, not knowing whither.

Towards night it began to rain and it became very cold. We tried to make a fire in the khans, the broad



ovens which stretched along the walls of the house. The pungent smoke of the kao-liang stalks poured through the cracks of the oven, and through the oven doors. From the kettle which was fixed in the masonry of the vestibule, came strong charcoal vapors which mingled with the smoke. My head was aching. The rain whipped through the torn paper windows, puddles gathered on the dirty window-ledges, and the water ran down into the khans. In our room sat an officer of the Rifle Division, who had been overtaken by the night, and had lost himself in the storm. He drank tea with rum, and told us that the rumors of peace were unfounded, and that it had been decided to continue the fight. Now the severe winter was on, and the fur jackets had not yet been sent. The men of the Rifle Division were glad that they had at least received their cloaks back: in the summer the cloaks had been taken away from them on account of their heavy weight and the extreme heat. There were neither projectiles nor supplies in the Army. The Harbin supply of projectiles had all been exhausted, and the only reliance was on a new supply from Russia. The country was deserted, the farmhouses in ruins. In a few months there would be neither buildings, nor fuel, nor provender. The year 1812 would be repeated, only we should be in the place of the French.

The wind swept the rain through the torn paper windows, and the room was cold, damp, and smoky.

The Chinamen stubbornly and concentratedly continued to work on their deserted farms. They spoke flatteringly to us, telling us that "Russian captain heap shango," and "Russian soldier hung-hutz," showed us their looted farms, and went back to their work of threshing and winnowing. And all night long could be heard the noise of their flat flails.

All about us, throughout the broad Mukden plain, in the fields and villages, organized, heartless looting was carried on on an enormous scale. In the fields there could be seen everywhere green rows of wagons, loading the sheaves of kao-liang and chumiz, and the loaded wagons moving in long files along the roads. At the commissariat there grew up gigantic mountains of kao-liang, chumiz, and rice straw, dozens of yards in length. I asked the officers and officials who watched the storing of the provender, whether they paid for the supplies that were being seized.

Some answered evasively that, of course, they paid for them, if the master could be found, but that the greater part of the Chinese had run away. Besides, they said, all these Chinese were remarkable scoundrels, for, to every mow and tree there appeared a dozen masters, and the prices asked for were extortionate.

Other officers and officials who were more frank, laughed slyly at my question, and replied:

"Yes, we do pay, at the market price."

"At the market price," was the common term in the Army with which to designate gratuitous acquisitions.

Our baggage warrant officer, too, was constantly going off with from six to eight wagons, to look after the foraging. Near our baggage station, mows and ricks of forage grew up. Once our soldiers returned from the foraging disheartened and frightened, and they told us that Hung-hu-tzü's had been shooting at them: they had driven into a village where there were no Russian troops, and, while the soldiers were loading chumiz straw, two shots were fired at them. Our soldiers informed some Cossacks who happened to pass by, and when these galloped into the village, the Chinese scattered and hid themselves. The Cossacks caught a boy, whom they beat with their knouts, to make him tell who had done the shooting; but they could

not get anything out of him. The supervisor gave the foraging soldiers some brandy. From that time on, they always carried rifles with them.

In our village all kinds of strange soldiers, as ever, sneaked into the buildings, and carried off everything they could. They walked up to the working Chinamen, and in their presence filled buckets with the threshed and winnowed grain, and carried them off. The Chinamen moaned, moved their arms in despair, and ran with their complaints to the "captains" who happened to go by. Some "captains" were provoked, took away the grain from the soldiers, and threatened them with arrest. Others, with an indolent smile, gave the following advice to the looting soldiers:

"My good fellows, hit him in the mug, and then he'll keep quiet!"

Half an hour later one could again see the flash of the flat flails in the air behind the low clay fences, and the heads of the yellow men, with their black queues bound around them, swayed in even motion. It was exasperating and incomprehensible to me that they continued to do so, and did not abandon it all.

But did the higher authorities know nothing of what was taking place, and did they not take any measures against it? Not at all. They did take definite and precise measures. For example, in our village there was displayed on a clay wall a large-lettered announcement of the following content:

"The Rear Division of the Army Corps.

"An order to the troops of the Manchurian Army of October 17, 1904, No. 34.

"The destruction of buildings and the carrying-off of utensils is strictly forbidden. Those guilty of violating this order, will be arrested and subjected to legal responsibility."

The soldiers who passed by with their loot, loved to stop before this announcement, and, for practice in reading, scanned it very carefully.

Kuropátkin himself used every effort to decrease the pillage, and he zealously issued paper after paper. However, he accused only the lower ranks of any wrong-doing.

In an order of September 7, 1904 (No. 547) Kuropátkin wrote as follows:

"It has come to the ears of the Commander of the Army that during the Army's progress to the north there have begun to appear cases of violence and illegal actions by the lower military ranks in relation to the inhabitants and their property, by which the population is provoked and the good relations between the inhabitants and the troops, which have been maintained up to the present with much effort, are strained: the population is deserting the villages and scattering in the surrounding country. The Commander of the Army is immeasurably grieved at this information, which is intended to shake his previous calm conviction that the troops which are intrusted to his command will, by their excellent and correct behavior, imperturbably and at all times maintain that excellent reputation which they have already established among all others."

In an order of September 22, 1904 (No. 614) it was determined to recompense the inhabitants for the ruined fields and buildings at once, and, in case of the absence of the owners, to make protocols of the extent of damage done.

An order of October 8, 1904 (No. 640) read:

"The Commander of the Army is informed that the passing echelons, foragers, the property men, and detachments of the troops, while seizing forage and products from the inhabitants, either do not pay them at all, or give them extremely insufficient pay, and that

the rank and file take off their shoulder-straps in order not to be recognized. The Commander of the Army reiterates his former order to the chiefs of all degrees, to take the most energetic and active measures for the surveillance of the men and the maintenance in the Army of the strictest internal order."

But the chiefs were not in any hurry to take "energetic and active measures." On February 2, 1905, the Commander-in-Chief wrote to General A. A. Bilderling, who was in temporary command of the Third Army (No. 1441):

"In my orders and specific instructions I have repeatedly directed the attention of the commanders to the necessity of instilling in the troops a strictly legal relation to the local population and their property. The good relation of the troops to the local population, which existed in the first part of the campaign, has, unfortunately, been considerably changed. In place of the regular requisitions with the precise accounting of the property seized for the purpose of immediate payment to the inhabitants, or, in case of their absence, to the Chinese administration, the troops act as robbers toward the property of the population, arbitrarily undertaking foraging expeditions, without the knowledge of the nearest authorities, and seizing products without any control whatsoever. A great quantity of the material seized is destroyed unproductively, and the very settlements are in a few days turned into ruins. Under such conditions the country occupied by us not only gives us an insignificant proportion of what it might furnish if the business of exploitation were placed on any kind of a regular basis, but the relations of the local population toward us are becoming worse and worse."

Such things took place on the spot, as described by Kuropátkin, and here is what the reporters told of it to the Russian public:

"They wire to the paper *Russ* as follows from Mukden: The Russian authorities pay in full for the losses caused by the troops to the Chinese. The Russian government pays the Chinese absolutely for all the losses, averaging about forty-five rubles for a desyatín of provisions. We also pay for the damaged farmhouses and other buildings." (*Russkiya Vyedomosti*, 1914, No. 288.)

Upon reading such news, everybody here roared, and I, who am addicted to authorship, blush at the shamelessness of the Russian pens.

I was very much interested to know about the relations between the Chinese and Japanese. This was rather hard to find out, since hardly any of us had a chance to be in those localities which were occupied by the Japanese. But those who had been there, for example, those who had participated in Mishchénko's raid, told us as follows: "The Japanese treated mercifully those Chinese who interfered with their established orders, but they paid the usual average prices of peace times for all the provisions and provender which they had seized in the regular way of requisition. The law was turned, but there was a law. The villages, of course with the exception of those in the positions, remained unharmed, and the temples were untouched. The farmhouses were not looted and destroyed, and the Chinese remained living in them. With the Japanese there reigned a stern law; with us, unbridled anarchy, which debased all men, from the general to the common soldier. During the Mukden retreat, an intelligent Chinaman said to me:

"Why do they beat you all the time? Because you came here, not to make war, but to plunder!"

Our chief surgeon, the supervisor with his assistant, and the clerk, now sat for days at a time in the office. They counted their money, made a noise on the abacus,

and kept writing and signing their names. There was something wrong in the accounts, and it was impossible to make them balance.

Now and then the supervisor's assistant, David Solomónovich Bruk, and the clerk, Iván Aleksándrovich Bruk, came to see us. They were brothers, Jews, and both supernumerary officials. The younger, Iván, was a very fine-looking and timid boy, who had been baptized into the Christian faith. He always lay down to sleep with a revolver by his side, was dreadfully afraid of Hung-hu-tzüs, but, above all, was in terror of getting into the line.

"Don't you see? They are carrying on organized plundering with us," he told us, excitedly. "False accounts, stealing, forged notes! And, just think of it, they want to get rid of me! I am in charge of the office, and yet the chief surgeon invites the secretary of the nearest regiment to compose an account of the foraging!"

He sat there, pale, with rolling eyes, and with an expression of anger and dejection on his set face.

"But let them try! I have a little document against them! Davýdov gave a Chinaman three rubles to sign his name to an account amounting to a hundred and eighty rubles, but he wrote in Chinese: 'I received three rubles.' Another Chinaman translated it for me! Just let them try! Only, don't you see, these scoundrels will have me immediately transferred to the line, and they know that I am afraid of it!"

From the positions arrived in our village for encampment an infantry regiment, which had been in the war for a long time. The chief surgeon invited the regimental secretary to supper. He was a corpulent little official who looked as though he had been carved out of a piece of oak. He had risen to the rank of Titulary Councillor of Scribes. Our chief surgeon, who usually was very stingy, this time did not spare any

money and lavishly treated his guest to wine and liqueurs. When under the influence of the liquor, the guest told how things were managed in his regiment, and he spoke frankly, with the condescending pride of a past master.

"We have sold twenty-two of the best baggage horses, and we reported that five had run away and that seventeen had died from improper feeding. We said that no protocol had been taken. Signature of the regimental commander. By the way, we are accounting for the maintenance of eighteen non-existing steers."

The chief surgeon cast a hostile glance at the supervisor.

"Do you see?" he said, with a show of irritation. "And our existing three steers have not even been entered as being on maintenance!"

The secretary told many stories. The chief surgeon and the supervisor listened eagerly to him, like students of a talented and magnetic teacher. After supper, the chief surgeon ordered the two Bruks to retire. He was left alone with the supervisor and his guest.

The younger Bruk came to see us. He was dejected and angry, and his face had a greyish-green tinge.

"Let them send for me now, I will not go there for anything!" he repeated, meditatively rolling his eyes.

He took a small lantern and went to the other end of the village, to make a call on the Sisters.

"He is a fool!" Shántser said, laughingly. "He thinks that they are getting rid of him and are hiding from him, in order not to share with him. He does not consider that they won't share with him anyway—they are afraid of him, because he is a smarty! They are trying to get rid of him because they don't want



him, because he does not understand anything in this serious matter."

About two hours later the chief surgeon, the supervisor, and the guest left the surgeon's house, in order to take tea in the apartment of the managing personnel, which was in the same farmhouse where we surgeons were living, and was separated from us by a vestibule. At tea the conversation was of a general nature. One could hear the loud, full voice of the supervisor and the hoarse and apparently suppressed voice of the chief surgeon.

"Port Arthur will, in any case, hold out for another six months. The Sixteenth Corps will soon arrive; then, if God grants it, the Manchurian Army will go into action."

We listened and smiled. Shántser merely expressed his æsthetic indignation.

"What business have they, thieves that they are, to talk of the action of the Manchurian army? How can they speak of it and look each other in the eye? I can't understand it. You see, Davýdov sends his wife every month from fifteen hundred to two thousand rubles, whereas she knows that his salary amounts to only five hundred rubles. What will he tell her when she asks where he got that money? What will he do when his children will accidentally discover this?"

"You're silly!" Selyukóv said, sighing, and started to undress himself.

At one o'clock in the morning, when we had already retired, the elder Bruk, the supervisor's assistant, entered our room. Shántser was the only one who was still up, and he was writing letters. For an hour and a half, Bruk told Shántser about the conversations of the day, and they both laughed, restraining themselves only enough not to awaken Selyukóv and Grechíkhin.

"Do you understand?" Bruk was saying. "I was

present at a regular gathering of suspicious characters and rascals. Every one of their acts is punishable with a number of years in Siberia, and this secretary is an expert pickpocket and just see the airs he puts on! He is not a supernumerary such as we are, but a 'Titulary Councillor.' "

"Ha, ha, ha! Eighteen non-existing steers on maintenance!" Shántser exclaimed, shaking with laughter.

"Yesterday Davýdov said to me: 'Did you hear about the hospitals which took our place at Mukden? During the engagement, ten thousand wounded passed through them. If we had been left at Mukden, we should now be rich men!' I said to him, 'Yes, we—you and I!'"

Shántser roared.

"Really, my good friend, why do you just stand and look on? They are filling their pockets, and you just gape!"

"Davýdov said to me to-day: 'Things don't go right with us! There is a deficiency everywhere! How are we going to make the accounts balance?'"

They both laughed and restrained each other in their outbursts with the words, "Hush, we'll wake them!"

"Wife said to me before leaving," Bruk said, in humorous meditation, "'Dave, don't sign any forged checks! Don't be dragged into court! Just come home hale and hearty, and you will manage to earn a living!'"

"You haven't made out any forged accounts yet?"

Bruk sighed, with a roguishly distressed expression on his face.

"They compelled me to write out one! In Mukden there had been many rumors about the chief surgeon's oats. To close Sultánov's mouth, he sold him 300 puds at one ruble forty, but he ordered me to write out

a bill at one ruble eighty kopeks. I refused to do so, but Davýdov said to me: 'What difference does it make to you? Why should we not do a kindness to Sultánov?' Sultánov himself is a scoundrel of the first water. Our Division Staff was in great need of oats, and Sultánov sold back a hundred puds. 'Davýdov,' says he, 'you know, is a crafty business man. He has flayed me at the rate of one ruble eighty kopeks. Well, I will sell it to you at a loss. I will let you have it at one ruble sixty kopeks.'"

"Well, sir, you've got your foot into a nice mess!"

"But don't you see, I did not think that my brother was such a scoundrel. He is provoked at all this, only because he doesn't get his share of the profits!"

Brúk looked solemn and gloomy. Shántser roared, again restraining himself so that he shouldn't be heard.

From the positions were heard continuous discharges of the guns. Sallies and night attacks took place, and now and then came the news that a new engagement was impending. The soldiers froze in the trenches. At night the thermometer went down to 18 or 16 degrees and the puddles froze over. The fur jackets had not yet arrived, although, according to the order of the Commander-in-Chief, they were to have been furnished on October first. Over their overcoats the soldiers put on Chinese cotton cloaks of a light grey color. They presented a sorry and ludicrous appearance, and the Japanese railed at them from their trenches. The officers told enviously of the fine fur coats and jackets of the Japanese, and how warmly and practically the captives were dressed.

Towards the end of October, the fur jackets at last arrived. The commissary officers were very proud because they were only a month late, for during the

Turko-Russian War the fur coats did not get to the army before May.<sup>1</sup>

About five days after our arrival at Su-ya-tun, we were ordered to encamp. We pitched three hospital tents, but in them it was as cold as in an ice cellar, and the sick and wounded froze terribly. Again they tried to fix up some farmhouses.

But few wounded were brought in. They were mostly sick men who came. They arrived with badly-neglected cases of rheumatism, bronchitis, and dysentery. Their legs were all swollen from long and constant sitting in the trenches. The sick were sent to the hospitals with great reluctance. The soldiers said that every one of them was suffering from diarrhoea, from rheumatism of the joints, and from constant coughing. If they asked to be sent to a hospital, the regimental surgeon would say: "You are only pretending. You simply want to get away from the position." They transported them to the hospitals only when they had to be carried on stretchers.

One evening an infantry regiment arrived from the positions at our village, in order to take a rest. The sun had set, the west was of a bright orange color, and darkness was already descending on the damp earth. Rows of black figures in bushy fur caps, with the sharp bayonet points, appeared on the low hill, stood out in bold outline against the evening glow, and descended and disappeared in the darkness. Above the black horizon moved only the black fur caps and

<sup>1</sup> However, as later appeared, there was no particular reason to express any pride, for the great majority of the fur jackets did not even reach the army in May, but only a year after the conclusion of peace. This is what the *Novoe Vremya* wrote in November, 1906: "Of late there have been arriving at Harbin not only separate cars, but even whole trains, of the commissariat, carrying chiefly warm clothing. These cargoes had been despatched from Russia to the active Army during its position on the Sha-ho, but they had been sidetracked somewhere until now."

the pointed forest of bayonets. The soldiers walked with a strange, tottering gait, and continuous coughing hovered over the regiment. It was an uninterrupted, dry hacking, such as I had never heard before. It was clear to me that all these soldiers, every one of them, ought to be sent to a hospital. If they were sent on, sick as they were, only a few would survive. There they let them sit diseased in the trenches, let them freeze and shiver, as long as they could hold out, and then they were sent away crippled for life. This was a disagreeable but iron logic: if men are thrown under a storm of piercing bullets and under shells which tear the body to pieces, why should one stop before a permanently disabling disease? There is only one consideration, and that is whether a man is still good for action. The rest is a matter of indifference.

By degrees an entirely new relation arose between the surgeon and the patient. The surgeon blended with the whole, ceased to be a surgeon, and began to look at the patient from the standpoint of his further usefulness for action. A slippery road! And from this road the medical conscience fell into the abyss of brazen police persecution and amazing heartlessness.

The Army began to be swamped with soldiers ordered back from the hospitals, who were totally unfit for service. They transferred to the line soldiers who could barely move their legs after severe cases of typhoid fever; they transferred cripples, men who were barely able to breathe, whose breasts had been pierced by bullets, who could not raise their wounded arms to the level of their shoulders. At last, even the military authorities became aware of the fact. In December the Military Medical Field Department was obliged to issue a circular (No. 9060) of the following contents: "It has come to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief that the Army is, to a great extent,

being replenished from the hospitals by the rank and file, who are either totally unfit for service, or who have not yet recovered from diseases." In view of this, the military institutions were asked to be more careful in discharging the patients.

It had come to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief. But why did it not come to the notice of the military medical authorities? Why did it not come to the notice of the surgeons themselves? It became necessary for the military generals to teach the surgeons how to be more attentive to the patients!

In our office heavy work was being handled from morning until night, under the guidance of the regimental secretary. They made up accounts and manufactured auditing sheets. If they could not find a Chinaman to sign a bill, they had the senior scribe do so. He copied a few Chinese letters from the long red strips which abundantly adorned the walls of any Chinese farmhouse.

The supervisor was getting nervous. He fell to musing. He frequently lost the thread of his conversation, and tried to make it appear that he rarely entered the office.

"He acts like a maiden that has just fallen," Sel-yukóv explained. "On the one hand, she is happy, and she will go to-morrow to a secret meeting; on the other hand, she feels uncomfortable and is afraid of the consequences."

The younger Bruk was gloomy, irritable, and angry at the chief surgeon and the supervisor. He made constant attempts to let them know that "he knew about their tricks." On entering into a book a false account, Bruk suddenly exclaimed:

"This account has been signed by our senior scribe!"

The chief surgeon calmly took the account in his hands and examined it.

"Has it? How artistically he has made the signature! Just like a Chinaman!"

In the evening, as Bruk was lying in his bed near the supervisor, he said:

"The chief surgeon assures us that he has no economic funds whatsoever in the hospital. But why does he not have them? The other day he put two thousand rubles into his pocket!"

"What!" the supervisor rolled his eyes in surprise, and sat up in his bed. "But how do you know? Such accusation may be uttered only if one has the proofs. To-morrow I shall ask Grigóri Yákovlevich whether or not that is true."

Bruk's heart sank into his boots. He grew pale and began to explain that possibly it only seemed so to him.

Towards the end of October we received the order to break camp and move about eight versts to the east, to the village of Mi-zan-tun. We abandoned the farmhouses which had been fixed up for the patients and the dugouts which the soldiers had made for themselves, and transferred ourselves to Mi-zan-tun. It was now quite out of the question to keep the patients in tents, because it was late in the autumn and very cold. We started to fix up the farmhouses, and the soldiers were making dugouts, when a new order came to move to the village of West Chen-hou-zu, some four versts to the northwest. Again we abandoned everything and moved on. The soldiers were furious and they said in irritation:

"There is no luck in our work!"

Formerly they had worked with a vim and pleasure. Now they dug, chopped, and plastered lazily and dreamily, for they were absolutely convinced of the uselessness of their work.

In war time two movable field hospitals are attached

to every division. They are supposed to do the work of the whole division, and to follow it everywhere. Our army stood near Mukden from August to February, but the separate military units had constantly been moved and transferred to other places. With them went the hospitals. We changed places, again fixed up the farmhouses for the patients, and finally encamped.

A new order—to break camp again, and to follow the unit once more. We did not have a movable field *hospital*,—there was, as the surgeons wittily remarked, something that belonged to the field and was movable. The institution was, unquestionably, a field institution, and it was movable—indeed, it was too movable—only it was not a hospital. It flopped about behind the division, uselessly and senselessly, carrying out its purposeless paper mission.

The Army all the time remained in one place. It would seem that there was no reason to move the countless field hospitals back of the units, up and down the front. What kept them from being stationed immovably in certain places? What difference did it make whether a sick soldier of one Russian army got to his hospital or to the hospital of another division? Besides, if the hospital remained in one place, it could arrange many spacious and warm buildings for the sick, with isolation tents for the contagious patients, with baths, and with a proper kitchen.

In that great complex business which was being done around us, the thing which was most needed was a living elasticity of organization, and ability and desire to adapt the given forms to every content; but the enormous, arbitrary paper monster enmeshed the whole army with its dry tentacles, and the men crept amidst them in cautious, timid zigzags, and did not think of business, but of how they could escape getting in the way of these tentacles.



We took up our position in West Chen-hou-zu. In the village the usual plundering of the Chinese was taking place. Two artillery parks were stationed here. Conflicts took place between the hospital and the parks. The artillerymen were taking a thatch off a roof. In the yard some rafters were sticking out of heaps of straw. Our chief surgeon or supervisor made his appearance.

"How dare you destroy the farmhouses? Do you not know the order of the Commander-in-Chief? I will have you turned over to the court-martial!"

The artillerymen disappeared, and our soldiers were ordered to pick up the beams and carry them to the hospital. The officers of the artillery parks did precisely the same with our soldiers.

The frosts were increasing in intensity. Occasionally snow fell. In Mukden a cubic sazhen (about two and two-thirds cords) of wood cost from seventy to eighty rubles, and soon went up to a hundred rubles. The destruction of the farmhouses assumed grand proportions. Whole villages presented nothing but heaps of half-destroyed clay walls. Everybody thought of himself only. If a military unit occupied ten houses in a village, it consumed all the rest for fuel. Upon leaving a village, it destroyed the last farmhouses and carried off all the wooden parts. And the stern Manchurian winter was still ahead of us.

The trees in the cemeteries were cut down. Every Chinese family has in its field its separate, inalienable family cemetery: in a small, square plot widely branching black poplars lean over a mass of conical hillocks crowded close together. This is a holy of holies for every Chinaman, an inviolable, quiet "blessed field." In the books about China we read: "A Chinaman through whose guilt foreigners are enabled to enter the holy enclosure of this field is considered a sacrilegist. A member of the family through whose guilt

the family loses this plot is under a curse and his name is stricken from the family book."

A Chinaman is attached with his whole heart to this most sacred place, to "the field of his ancestors," which lies in the midst of his land. When we were stationed at Mi-zan-tun, an order was received for the deportation of all the Chinese from the village. The deportation was carried on with customary cruelty and heartlessness. The inhabitants were given two hours in which to get ready. The Cossacks, with knouts in their hands, hurried them in their packing, and the Chinese hastily stuck into their baskets whatever they could lay their hands on.

"That will do! Move on!" and the Cossacks took them by the back of the neck and put them out of their houses.

All were deported. Immediately a few old men returned. They were again deported. They returned once more, and all died on the graves of their ancestors. One old man had been observed by the officers wandering for a long time over his cemetery. They paid no attention to him. He lived in the field in a miserable kao-liang shack, fed on beans, and drank water from a puddle. After a very cold night, he was found frozen stiff in his cemetery.

In these quiet "blessed fields" one could now hear the noise of Russian axes everywhere, and the tall trees fell creaking to the ground. The whole broad Mukden plain was devastated before our eyes and turned into a barren desert. When we arrived there it was a flourishing country. Everywhere happy villages were hidden in verdure, and everywhere could be seen the darkling cemetery groves. Now there were no trees, and only stumps stood out. The clay ruins of the villages looked gloomy and desolate. Enormous packs of homeless dogs, maddened from hunger, raced over the fields. At night the soldiers had to defend them-

selves against them with their rifles. The dogs fought one another, and tore up and devoured their companions. In the positions they ate the corpses, attacked the wounded that had not been picked up, and in the rear gnawed the skeletons of the Chinese dead.

The Chinese coffins are not placed in the ground: they are simply put on the ground and covered up with conical hillocks of earth. The coffins are large and strong, being constructed from thick planks. The soldiers opened the graves and carried away the lids and walls of the coffins for fuel and left the skeletons unburied. And the dogs gnawed at them. From the open graves grinned the yellowed, eyeless skulls from which the queues had rotted away, and the clutching dark fingers stuck out from the decomposed, broad blue sleeves.

Yes, everything was done by Christian Russia to crush the well-being and the very soul of the quiet, peaceful local peasantry. The desecrated temples, the profaned cemeteries—heartlessness and indifference for everything! It was as though a thick poisonous mist, full of beastly savagery and of terrible neglect for man, was slowly descending upon the Manchurian plains. Over there in distant Russia they were singing hymns to the new Christ warriors in their great struggle with paganism, while here the intelligent Chinese stood in absolute perplexity before what was taking place. They said:

"We understand that war is war, but we do not understand why you must pollute the graves of our fathers and revile our gods."

The Corps Controller with his assistants arrived at our hospital and began the work of revision.

From early in the morning until late at night they sat in the office with the chief surgeon and the supervisor. The abacuses clicked, and one could hear the

words: "from the advance sum"; "to the account of economic sum"; "the provision list"; "the soldiers' mess." They compared the documents, audited them, and saw to it that there was not a kopek's worth of mistake. The chief surgeon and the supervisor gave business-like explanations. Everything balanced correctly and accurately.

Everybody in the Army knew well that the provender, the fuel, and many other things, were collected by the Army units on the spot, gratis, and that in Mukden the Chinese shops quite openly handled forged Chinese notes, certifying to the receipt of any sum desired. And yet, the controllers conscientiously examined every Chinese account, carefully added the sums, in order to see whether they agreed with the sums indicated in the forged accounts. There could be but one purpose of such a control, and that was to train the Army in precise rascality. For hours at a time men sat with serious, business-like look and clicked the abacus, while above them the countenanceless paper god flitted on his dry wings and nodded to them with the gentle appearance of an accomplice.

The controllers went away. The chief surgeon and the supervisor strutted about in contentment and satisfaction. The younger Bruk was green with envy and was getting thin and sickly.

It was fun to watch this young man. In order to have a corner of our own, we physicians were obliged to settle at the other end of the village. It was a long distance to the main office, and the surgeon of the day passed all his time in the office where Iván Bruk was stationed. There was plenty of opportunity to observe him.

Tall and good-looking, conscious of his prepossessing appearance, he readily told how he had married an oldish daughter of a Councillor of State, and how he had for that purpose turned Christian.

"Just imagine!" he said, reproachfully; "my eldest brother has for this broken off all communication with me! But why? Have I not improved my condition? They gave me as a dowry a little house—you ought to see the fine garden attached to it, and the fruit in the garden! They got me a job in a bank, where I get eighty rubles salary!"

He showed us all the forged documents and told us of the scoundrelly transactions of the chief surgeon.

"Here is a little document which Davýdov has lately brought from Mukden. Look at it!"

On fine Chinese paper it said: "For a steer, received in full, eighty-five rubles," and then followed a Chinese signature.

"Well, eighty-five rubles is fair enough!" I remarked.

Bruk's eyes glistened merrily and slyly.

"Yes, only there was no steer in the transaction. It's the same steer that was bought before! At first, we entered him as for the maintenance of the detachment, and now we've carried him over as for the maintenance of the patients!"

Bruk's face beamed with joy, but suddenly his eyes grew dim, and he looked malicious.

"But do you understand what kind of rascals they are? I know all their tricks, and I don't get anything for it! You remember, at Su-ya-tun we frequently saw the Regimental Secretary: the Manager of the Household Division pays him a hundred rubles a month for keeping quiet, and he has other incomes beside!"

"Iván, stop!" his brother David said, in annoyance.

"But I will take what belongs to me! And don't let them forget that! I have hinted to the chief surgeon that I am on to his tricks. I purposely borrowed of him fifty rubles which I shall not return, and I have let him know that I do not consider myself his debtor."

"What a rascal!" David remarked.

"Who? I?" Iván asked, in surprise,

David sighed.

"Yes, you, among others!"

"But understand! I enter all their forged accounts in the books, and they don't share with me!"

Iván fell to musing.

"Yes, if they had fixed matters differently, I would come back from the war a rich man!"

A plan was slowly maturing in his head.

"Do you know, I think the chief surgeon is embarrassed and does not know in what form to offer me the money," he hazarded. "I'll have a talk with him in a day or two."

At last the plan materialized. One evening Bruk sent a soldier clerk with a letter of the following content to the chief surgeon:

"Honored Grigóri Yákovlevich, you can't help knowing that you are earning money partly due to my aid, and I would be very much obliged to you if you would share with me at least part of the profits."

Bruk, with foresight, inclosed an empty envelope in the letter. "Maybe Davýdov will not have an envelope handy," he said. The soldier took the letter to the chief surgeon, but the latter said that there would be no answer.

Bruk waited in the office for two hours, and then went to see Davýdov. The Sisters and the supervisor were with him. The chief surgeon jested with the Sisters and laughed, and paid no attention to Bruk. The letter, torn to shreds, was lying on the floor. Bruk remained there for a while, picked up the bits of his letter, and went away.

Next day the chief surgeon did not appear in the office, nor did he show up for two or three days. Bruk gave us all the details of the story, and was agitated and expectant.

"I am awfully afraid that he will suddenly transfer me to the line!"

"But, my dear man, you are trying to get there as fast as you can," Shántser said, laughing.

Brúk's eyes rolled, and on his pale lips flashed a sly smile.

"Then I will inform on all of them!" he burst out.

The elder Brúk, who had been sent on business to Harbin, returned. The chief surgeon sent for him, and told him about the letter which his brother had written, and said:

"I tore up that letter out of pity for you. This boy does not understand what might have happened to him for such a letter. Talk with him and make it clear to him. As to the profits, it is true I do not show a part of the sums in the accounts, but hold it back in case there should be a deficit. You know how muddled and complex the military laws are, and how the control may any minute find this or that expenditure illegal, and then I shall be responsible for the sum. But if there should be no deficit, and all should end well, I would, after the war, divide up these sums with everybody."

David Brúk intended to have a talk with his brother in the evening, but after dinner Iván went off with the chief surgeon to the corps treasury. David was dreadfully agitated, for fear that Iván might on his way mention the question of the sharing of the profits to the chief surgeon.

Iván returned late in the evening.

"Do you know, I have had a talk with the chief surgeon on my way down," he explained to his brother.

David raised his arms in horror.

"You are a fool, that's what you are!"

"Not at all a fool," Iván calmly replied. "Rest assured that I know him better than you. At Christmas I am to be rewarded for my earnest labor in the office by a monthly increase of twenty-five rubles, and besides, he has given me to understand that the fifty

rubles which I had borrowed from him he considers to be mine."

On our way to Manchuria, and here in Manchuria itself, one circumstance in particular surprised us. The Army suffered a great lack of a personnel in officers. The wounded officers were returned to the line before they were barely well again. The commissions of discharge, according to superior orders, became stricter from month to month, and the officers were freed with increasing difficulty. The officers of the line, those who were ailing and frequently those who were quite ill, constantly turned to us for medical advice. Of those who had arrived here in the beginning of the war, many were so worn out that they awaited wounds and death as a delivery.

At the same time a mass of healthy, robust officers occupied secure and peaceful offices in the rear of the Army. The most astounding thing was that the officers in these rear positions received better pay than those in the line. They filled the offices of the commissariat, were supervisors of hospitals and lazarettos, and commanders of stations, étapes, and sanitary trains, and were in charge of all kinds of stores, transports, baggage-trains, and bakeries. Here, where their work could easily have been done by officials, it was considered necessary to maintain the complex of officers, whereas in the engagements, the command of companies was in the hands of supernumerary ensigns, that is, of non-commissioned officers, who had been advanced to the position of commissioned officers only for the time being. It looked as though the special military education of the officers were not considered necessary for battle. The companies went into action with a civilized, educated enemy under the guidance of non-commissioned officers, while the real officers, who had been specially trained for war, in the bloom



of health, were counting hospital cloaks and selling sweetmeats and pastry in the cars of the Economic Societies for Officers.

Once the Commander of our Division visited our hospital. He examined the apartments, then he went to have tea with the chief surgeon.

"Yes, lieutenant," the general said, turning to the supervisor, "you will be transferred to the line. The Commander-in-Chief has ordered to have the officers of the line who are recovering from wounds sent to the quiet rear positions, and the fit officers to be transferred to the line. You may choose whichever regiment you wish to be transferred to."

The supervisor turned white as a sheet and his knees trembled. He shrunk and stooped.

"Yes, sir," he replied in a faint voice.

"Your Excellency, he is not fit for the line," the chief surgeon ventured to remark. "He is no good as an officer, has completely forgotten line duty, and, besides, he is a terrible coward—whereas he is a splendid supervisor. I assure you that in the line he will do only harm."

The general cast a stealthy look through his glasses at the supervisor, and his eyes betrayed a sarcastic smile: the supervisor was all curled up, his glance was fixed, and, apparently, he was not in the least offended by the reference to his cowardice.

"An officer cannot be a coward," the general said, abruptly, "and I cannot interfere with the order which the Commander-in-Chief has given. Think it over, and let the staff know which regiment you have chosen."

"Yes, sir," the supervisor replied again.

The general drove away.

The supervisor was a changed man. Formerly self-satisfied, arrogant, and jolly, he now sat in silence and concentrated thought. Whenever the warrant officer

came for orders, the supervisor waved his hand and replied:

"Do as you please!"

He called on the Sisters and embarrassed them by sitting for hours at a time on the warm khan. He squatted in Turkish fashion, and his pudgy figure remained motionless. If he had anything to say, it would be something like this:

"When I am wounded and they bring me to your hospital . . ."

He now walked with a pronounced stoop, and, like a paralytic old man, shuffled his big feet in their felt boots.

The order of the Commander-in-Chief was also issued to the other institutions. Unrest and gloom entered everywhere.

The chief surgeon passed all the days travelling up and down making frantic efforts to save the supervisor. Formerly Davýdov had constantly expressed his dissatisfaction with the supervisor's indolence and lack of business sense. And even now, he referred to him in such words as: "What is this log good for in the line? He is of no use even here as a supervisor." None the less, he continued his pleas in his behalf: "Just out of the goodness of my heart—I am sorry for the fellow," Davýdov himself explained. But everybody around knew clearly the cause of his kindness. The supervisor was inactive and indolent, and this was an advantage to the sly and active chief surgeon, because he could take the whole management into his own hands. Again, the supervisor was obviously an "honest" man, that is, he did not put anything into his pocket and pretended not to see the chief surgeon's rascality, consequently it was not necessary to share profits with him. He was just the man the chief surgeon wanted.

Days passed. It so happened that the supervisor's

transfer to the regiment was delayed. Some kind of obstacle was met, and it appeared that the matter could be settled only a month later. A month later they forgot all about it. The supervisor remained in the hospital, and the wounded officer who had been appointed to his place again returned to the line.

Just as imperceptibly, quite accidentally, in consequence of an unforeseen concurrence of circumstances, all affairs arranged themselves. Everybody remained in his place—for everybody it appeared possible to make an exception from the rule. The only one who found his way to the line was the supervisor of Sultánov's hospital. Of course, it would not have been much work for Sultánov to have kept him, but Sultánov was not in the habit of interceding for others, and he had influential connections so high up that no other supervisor was either terrible or inconvenient for him.

So, once more, in the *étapes*, at the stations, in the lazarettos and baggage-trains, everywhere were to be seen those robust, well-fed officers. The order of the Commander-in-Chief, just like all his other orders, flapped in the air for a while like a useless scrap of paper, frightening simpletons, and then it disappeared under the cloth.

To our hospital there came sick men, with now and then a few wounded. Were they to be treated on the spot, or to be transported to the rear? This was a very complex question, with which the authorities were quite unable to cope. If the surgeon of the corps arrived and learned that we transferred the patients, he scolded us: "You have a hospital, and you turn it into a station of *étapes*. What are your surgeons, Sisters, and drug-stores for?" If the commander of the sanitary division, Trépov, came and learned that the patients lay there for five or six days, he scolded

us: "Why do the patients lie here so long? Why do you not transfer them?" He was simply mad on the question of evacuation.

General Trépov was the Chief Commander of the whole Sanitary Division of the Army. No one would have been able to say what qualifications he possessed for the management of this responsible position. He had been either a senator or a governor before he dropped into the position of commander of the sanitary division, and was distinguished chiefly for his amazing lack of business sense; while in matters of medicine he was a downright ignoramus. None the less, the general interfered in purely medical questions, and lavishly scattered reprimands among physicians for causes in regard to which he was totally incompetent to judge.

Once, in inspecting our hospital, his attention rested on a patient who was lying in the ward for chronics.

"What is his ailment?"

"Syphilis."

"What? You place a syphilitic in the common ward?"

"Your Excellency, he has it in the tertiary stage, it is not contagious, and we have no separate syphilitic ward. He was placed here to-day, and to-morrow we shall transfer him."

"That makes no difference! The idea of placing a syphilitic together with other patients! Let that never happen again!"

At another time, again in the chronic ward, Trépov saw a soldier with chronic eczema on his face. The patient presented a terrifying appearance, a red, bloated face, with a scaly skin, covered with yellow scabs. The general was beside himself and sternly asked the chief surgeon why such a patient was not isolated. The chief surgeon respectfully explained

that the disease was not contagious. The general grew silent and walked on. As he left, he thanked the chief surgeon for the good order in the hospital.

After every visit of the higher authorities, the representative of the military institution is obliged to inform his immediate superiors of the inspection that has taken place, with a statement of all remarks, approvals, and reprimands, made by the inspecting authorities. The chief surgeon telegraphed to the Surgeon of the Corps that the Commander of the Sanitary Division had visited the hospital, and had been satisfied with the order observed. The next day the Surgeon of the Corps came galloping up, and he reprimanded the chief surgeon:

"You wired me that Trépov found everything in order, whereas Trépov came to see me and informed me that he had reprimanded you for keeping contagious patients together with the non-contagious patients."

The chief surgeon shrugged his shoulders in perplexity, and explained the matter to the Surgeon of the Corps, saying that he did not consider General Trépov competent enough to reprimand the surgeons in the field of medicine, and that he had not wired about the reprimand from a sense of delicacy, since he did not wish in an official paper to put the Commander of the Sanitary Division in a ludicrous situation. All that was left for the Surgeon of the Corps to do was to change the subject of conversation.

To be a mere surgeon's assistant or a Sister of Mercy, to execute mere administrative duties in matters of medicine, special training was required; whereas no special information whatsoever was required from a person in order to carry out the most important and responsible medical functions in an army of half a million men. All that was necessary was to have the corresponding rank. Here is a document, and I

assure the reader in all seriousness that it is not taken from a comic paper, but that it was given in an appendix to an Order of the Commander-in-Chief of November 18, 1904, under No. 130.

**"The Personnel of the Management of the Chief Commander of the Sanitary Division under the Commander-in-Chief:**

**"Chief Commander of the Sanitary Division (a Lieutenant-General)—1. General for special orders (Major-General)—1. Personnel of the management: Commander of the Hospital Division (may be a surgeon)—1. Chief of the Evacuating Division (may be a surgeon)—1. For special orders: staff officers—2, surgeons—3.**

**"Sanitaro-Statistical Bureau: In charge of the bureau, a Colonel, may be a Major-General (may be a surgeon)—1. Assistant surgeons—2.**

**"Office of the Chief Field Militaro-Medical Inspector: Chief Field Militaro-Medical Inspector—1. Chief Field Surgeon—1. Manager of the office (a surgeon)—1. Officers for special orders: Surgeons of the third medical order—2, of the fourth order—2.**

**"Chief Field Evacuating Commission of the Army: Chairman of the Commission, a Major-General (may be a Colonel)—1. Chairman's assistants—2. Chief Surgeon of Commission—1. For special orders: superior officers—6, surgeons—10."**

The medico-sanitary affairs of the army with the Japanese were in charge of well-known professors of medicine. With us, as may be seen from the document quoted, not a single responsible position, except that of Militaro-Medical Inspector, was entrusted to a surgeon. Examine the first part of the document, in which the personnel of the central militaro-sanitary management of the whole Army is determined: a lieu-

tenant-general, a major-general. In the secondary positions there *may be* surgeons, but may also be colonels. Only three positions are definitely in the hands of surgeons, and those are for special orders.

The whole document strictly follows the same style. Here and there there is a condescending remark in regard to the secondary positions: *may be* a surgeon; but in general the surgeons are entrusted only with the lowest, purely executive duties, such as management of offices, "for special orders," and so forth. There is only one exception which mars the style: in regard to the chief field surgeon, it does not say that he *may be* a surgeon. Why? If the commander of the sanitary division could be a former governor, and the inspector of hospitals an ex-chief of police, why could not the chief field surgeon be, for example, an ex-captain of police?

But all this is too sad to be laughable. If only, by the side of ignorant generals and lieutenants, the parts of their assistants had been entrusted to talented, well-trained physicians! There was nothing of the kind. In the management of the army we do not find a single surgeon who passed as an authority in scientific or moral matters. Mediocre surgeons with paper souls of officials, who had passed through a course of military drill until they had completely lost their personalities, presided everywhere. To expect of them a show of genius, independent creative power, warm love for their work, would be the same as looking for warm blood and living nerves in reams of official documents. The reader has seen already in part and will soon see in full what the military carriers of the highest medical offices, General Tréprov, Ezérski, Chetýrkin, and so forth, represented in their persons.

The long suffering Russian Army bore the consequences of such a composition of the highest medical management. In the first engagement, near Tu-ren-

chen, the wounded walked and crawled helplessly for dozens of versts, while hundreds of surgeons and dozens of hospitals had nothing to do. The same thing was repeated in all the following engagements, inclusive of the great Mukden Battle. An enormous reserve of military forces, totally untouched, appeared each time, with fateful regularity, and the business of attending to the wounded was so arranged as though our whole Army were provided only with a few dozens of surgeons.

Our superiors produced a staggering impression on an unspoiled soul. I would not have undertaken to represent them in the form of *belles-lettres*. No matter how I might soften actuality, how I might dampen the colors, the reader would say that this is a malicious charge, an overdrawn caricature, and that such men could not exist at the present time.

Indeed, we surgeons of the reserve ourselves thought that such men, especially among surgeons, had long ceased to exist. We looked in amazement at our superiors, "the senior comrades," who ordered us about. It was as though there arose from grey antiquity dim, hazy phantoms with haughty, dispassionate faces, with goose quills behind their ears, with ink-stand thoughts and paper souls. Before us were materialized the monstrous sketches from "The Revizor," "Dead Souls," and "Provincial Sketches."

The subordinates were not supposed to have an opinion of their own, even in purely medical matters. We were not permitted to contradict a diagnosis made by the authorities, no matter how superficial or purposely dishonest such a diagnosis might be. The Inspector of the Third Army made the rounds of the hospital in my presence. He took the card of one patient and saw upon it the diagnosis—"typhoid fever." He walked up to the patient and, without



removing his shirt, poked him under the left ribs, and pronounced:

"This is not typhoid fever, but influenza!"

He ordered the diagnosis to be changed at once. The Militaro-Medical Inspector of the Rear, upon visiting the hospitals under his charge, invariably frowned when he heard the diagnosis of "typhoid fever" from the orderly, and asked:

"What do you consider to be the symptoms of typhoid fever?"

One of the surgeons answered:

"Your Excellency, I have already passed my examination, and I am under no obligation to pass it a second time!"

For his impudence, the surgeon was transferred to the regiment. Dr. M. L. Khéysin tells in *God's World* (1906, No. 6) of an incident which, to a physician who has been in the war, does not sound like an anecdote, but like a most probable fact, arising from the very essence of conditions prevailing there. Inspector V., making the rounds of a hospital, asked the orderly:

"Has the patient's spleen increased in size?"

"As you please, Your Excellency," replied the clever orderly.

The coarseness and ignorance of the militaro-medical authorities surpassed all bounds. It is sad, but it is true: the military generals, in their relations with their subordinates, were, for the most part, coarse and common, but, in comparison with the medical generals, they could serve as models for gentlemen. I have told before how in Mukden Dr. Gorbatsévich used to shout at the surgeons, "Listen, you!" During a visit at our hospital, the inspector of our army asks a comrade who is in charge for the day:

"When was the patient put down?"

"To-day."

"When were you put down here?" he says, turning to the patient.

"To-day."

Similar kinds of verifications, which any man might have been embarrassed to make in relation to his lackey, were done here with the greatest unconcern in regard to the surgeons.

By the side of this arrogance, which was intoxicated by its rank and position, went an amazing heartlessness in relation to the subordinate surgeons. The Evacuating Commission, which, for its severity and fault-finding, was nick-named "Draconic," lists for discharge a surgeon who is just recovering from an extremely severe case of typhoid fever. Without examining the sick comrade, without having once looked at him, Dr. Gorbatsévich reverses the decree of the Commission, and the surgeon, exhausted by his disease, is returned to his former place of duty. What Dr. Gorbatsévich had done with the surgeons ordered to duty during our stay at Mukden was repeated more than once. I happened to be in Mukden in the middle of November. Again some thirty surgeons were running about aimlessly, without knowing where to go—Gorbatsévich had ordered them from Harbin in case of an engagement, and had again cautioned them that they should take no belongings with them. They slept in the inspector's office on mattings laid on the bare floor.

One could observe only one warm, all-embracing feeling in the dispassionate souls of the military chiefs, and that was a reverent, thrilling love for the paper. The paper was everything—in the paper was life, truth, business. Before me stands alive the thin, bald figure of a Division Surgeon, with a morose, dry face. This was in Si-pin-gay, after the Mukden defeat.

"Have you lost anything from the baggage-train?" the Chief of the Sanitary Division of our Army asked.

"Everything is lost, Your Excellency," the Division Surgeon replied, gloomily.

"Everything? The tents, the dressing material, and the instruments?"

"No, all that is safe. But the office is all lost!"

The general turned away contemptuously, and the face of the Division Surgeon looked more morose, and his head more bald.

During the same Mukden retreat, an officer of a half-company which had been ordered to guard a field hospital asked the chief surgeon to look after the provisioning of his soldiers.

"I can't do it, Lieutenant. I can't!" replied the chief surgeon.

"Why not? You are provisioning, as it is, a hundred men of your detachment."

"But I can't attend to yours. The baggage-train has not yet wholly arrived, and the office is not here!"

The officer could not restrain himself:

"Excuse me, Doctor. You seem to think that my soldiers feed on paper! No, sir, they won't eat paper!"

Our Division Surgeon reprimanded the regimental surgeons because all the items were not filled in.

"But we have no data for these items!"

"Well, well, that makes no difference. Write in fictitious figures, but let all the items be filled in!"

In one of our regiments intestinal typhoid fever broke out. The Corps Surgeon asked the regimental surgeon:

"Have you attended to the disinfection?"

"Disinfection? Why, we have no material for disinfection!"

"Have you attended to the disinfection?" the Corps Surgeon repeated with emphasis.

"Did I not tell you . . ."

"I hope you *have* attended to the disinfection!"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Very well! Please hand me a report that the disinfection has been attended to!"

When, in the beginning of November, the fur jackets were at last sent to the Army, the soldiers began to be infected from them with the Siberian plague. Cases of infection occurred in our detachment also. The paper machine began to work, telegrams began to fly from us in all directions, and in reply came flying to us telegrams with strict orders: "Isolate," "disinfect most carefully," "report about measures taken." We did as we were asked, and wrote a report. The Division Surgeon was not at home, and the report was received by his assistant, who was a friend of ours. He received the report with a serious, business-like face, entered it into a book, made some kind of note, and sent something somewhere. Then we sat down to have a cup of tea. During the tea, he suddenly asked us, with a sly smile:

"Among friends, have you really attended to the disinfection?"

This friendly question gave us a sudden insight into something great and ominous to follow. He most frankly bared before us the whole matter. They write false papers, the superior officers read them and pretend that they believe them, because over every authority there is a superior authority, and the latter, they hope, will certainly believe them.

How important the paper was for the medical authorities, and how infinitely unimportant the health of a living soldier, is shown by an incredible circular of the Militaro-Medical Inspector Pro Tem of the Army, Dr. Vrédén. This circular ought to be entered in huge letters of mourning into the history of the Russian military medical science:

"In the matter of providing the troops and the militaro-medical institutions in war times with objects of medical necessity," writes Dr. Vrédén, "a correct

expenditure of these objects is of great importance. They are furnished in definite quantities intended to meet only the most essential needs. On the part of the surgeon is demanded a detailed acquaintance not only with the character of the military patient, but also with the means at the disposal of the Army with which to satisfy the needs of the patient both for treatment and for sustenance—and this acquaintance is attained only by a more or less continuous service in the War Department, whereas almost half of the surgeons of the Manchurian Army belong to those who have been called from the reserve, who have had no experience in the Army or in military-medical institutions. As a direct result of the lack of acquaintance with the conditions of war and of military-medical service, may be adduced the rapid expenditure of the most necessary means on patients who, presenting only complaints of apparent sickness instead of real suffering, which may be verified by objective data, are not at all in need of medical aid. In consequence, complaints are heard of a lack of medicaments, due to the insufficiency of the military-medical supplies, whereas, in reality, there is an ignorance on the part of the surgeons as to the war patients, and an inability to use the means at their command. In directing the attention of the surgeons subject to my authority to this undesirable phenomenon in the expenditure of medical material, I request the more experienced military surgeons to acquaint their junior comrades, who have just been summoned from the reserve, with the peculiarities of the military-medical service as regards the treatment of patients.

“In recommending the observance of economy in the expenditure of medical material, I have chiefly in view the obviating of a lack of medicaments for the patients who are really in need of them, and not at all economy for the sake of economy. Although in

the region of the Manchurian Army and in the rear may be found great supplies of medical property, sent for the need of the Army by the Red Cross Society, yet the ability to use them at any time cannot serve as a justification of a frivolous expenditure of medicaments and dressing material. Besides, we must keep in mind that the application for the aid of the Red Cross may give cause for an accusation of the military-medical department for an insufficient supply to the Army of objects of medical necessity. Without in the least limiting the use of the above-mentioned objects from the supplies of the Red Cross, the Military-Medical Field Department considers it necessary to remind the surgeon that this use should take place only in cases of actual need." (Circular of the Military-Medical Field Department, Division of Pharmacy, No. 1156.)

I do not know whether it is possible to lay bare the whole barrenness of the Russian military-medical conscience more fully than has been done in this circular. Indeed, military medicine is some kind of a special medicine. Our ordinary human scientific medicine will only groan at the juxtaposition of "only complaints of apparent sickness" and "real suffering, which may be verified by objective data": many diseases do not represent any objective data, but in spite of the injunctions of Dr. Vrédién, are nevertheless very much "in need of treatment." And the question is not even in regard to freeing the sick soldiers more strictly from work or in regard to evacuating them,—no, the question is simply in regard to the giving of medicine. Let us make an improbable assumption that half of the patients are without "objective data"—malingerers, who are not in need of treatment. It would seem that for the other half of the sick who are really in need of treatment—for certainly Dr. Vrédién is not convinced that every disease finds its expression in objec-

tive symptoms—it would seem that for the sake of these really 'sick one might risk wasting medicine in vain on the malingerers. But no, let everybody remain without treatment, for that is not so important. At least, there will be no "complaints of a lack of medicaments, due to the insufficiency of the militaro-medical supplies." That is far more important, and, mind you, the medical department is afraid of the complaints of a lack, and not of the lack itself. There will be no lack. From the same circular we learn that it is easy to obtain the medicaments and dressing material from the Red Cross, which has "large supplies, which may be used at any time." But what of it? "The application for the aid of the Red Cross may give cause for accusing the militaro-medical department of an insufficient supply to the Army of objects of medical necessity."

In his circular, Dr. Vrédién speaks with great approval of "the experienced military surgeons," and does not express the least doubt but that they will fully comply with "the peculiarities of the militaro-medical service," as indicated in the circular. Is Dr. Vrédién calumniating the military surgeons, or did they really deserve his approval?

In one of our regiments a severe epidemic of intestinal typhoid broke out. The dressing station was overrun with typhoid patients. The junior surgeons pointed this out to the senior regimental surgeon, a military man. "But no, this is not typhoid fever! What's the use of sending them to the hospital? Let them get well here!"

We showed him the roseola—"not distinct!" We showed him the swollen spleen—"not distinct!" And the patients overcrowded the station. And it was right here that the men were received from the ambulances. The typhoid patients who left the buildings

for necessity fainted away. The junior surgeons were provoked and pressed the senior surgeon hard. He ultimately gave in and went to the chief of the regiment. The colonel was angry:

"No, no, there is no need of sending them to the hospital! What's the use? Why, some people go through a case of typhoid while up and about. This is not at all such a dangerous disease, and besides, is it typhoid?"

But the patients kept coming, and there was no empty place left. Willy-nilly, it became necessary to send a dozen of the more seriously ill to our hospital. They were sent without a diagnosis. At the door of the hospital one of the patients, upon leaving the cart, fell into a swoon before the eyes of our Corps Surgeon. The Corps Surgeon examined those who were brought, became excited, and drove off to the regiment, —and the station was at last cleared of typhoid patients.

In another regiment of our Division, the senior surgeon had only two expressions in regard to the sick soldiers, and these were "malingering" and "faking." In every soldier he saw a malingerer. I have told of this surgeon in the first chapter of the "Memoirs," how he denounced as malingerers two soldiers who, upon investigation by the junior surgeon, turned out to be absolutely unfit for service. It was a fixed determination of this surgeon to account for not more than twenty ambulance patients a day. In reality, there were seventy or eighty. But what kind of sanitary condition would that show for the regiment?

Once, while I was in charge of the hospital, they brought several sick soldiers. One of them attracted my attention by the expression on his face: the young fellow, with a low, receding brow, betrayed in his eyes dull, repressed suffering, while the corners of his lips had a pronounced droop.



"Where does it hurt?"

"Your Honor, he is deaf, he does not hear," the regimental surgeon's assistant informed me.

I shouted my questions into the soldier's ears. He acted as though he awoke from deep meditation, repeated my question and answered it.

During the October engagements he had been hit by a bullet in his hip. He had lately been ordered back to the line from the Harbin hospital, and he had a pronounced limp in his right leg.

I asked him how long he had been deaf. The soldier told me that some three years before, previous to his entrance into military service, he had been hauling hay to the ricks, when he fell from the wagon and struck the ground with his head. Since that time he had a noise in his ears, and he suffered from vertigo until deafness set in.

"I was taken into the Army because they did not believe me when I said I was hard of hearing," he said, apathetically. "In the company both the sergeant and the drill corporals knocked me hard on my head. Now I am completely deaf. I was afraid to complain, because they would have beaten me to death. When I went to the station, the doctor said, 'You are only pretending. I'll have you court-martialled!' So I stopped going to the station."

All evening the face of that fellow stood before me, and I felt uncomfortable and pained.

I told the chief surgeon about him. In the morning a committee of us investigated the case of a soldier who was suffering from hernia, for the purpose of transporting him to Russia. I proposed to the chief surgeon to investigate about the deaf fellow at the same time. We went up to his cot.

"Put on your cloak," the chief surgeon said in his usual voice, stealthily watching the patient.

The soldier did not move. The chief surgeon shouted

louder, the soldier got up hurriedly and put on his cloak.

The instruments were brought. Shántser, who was a specialist in diseases of the ear, otoscoped the sick man. The back part of one of the ear-drum membranes was hardened. Shántser helplessly shrugged his shoulders.

"It is difficult to prove anything here," he said. "Science possesses no means with which to tell whether the patient is simulating deafness in both ears."

"Never mind! Go on investigating. I shall find out," the chief surgeon whispered, with a sly smile.

He spoke carelessly with the soldier and secretly watched him. He spoke, now louder, now softer, put sudden questions, and attacked him from all sides, watching him with treacherously piercing eyes. Suddenly the question flashed through my mind, where am I? In a hospital with physicians, or in a detention ward amidst gendarmes and detectives?

"He is simulating," the chief surgeon declared, conclusively and solemnly. "Observe, to Dr. Shántser's questions he answers immediately, and mine he doesn't seem to hear at all."

"This is quite natural," I retorted. "Shántser's voice is sonorous, and yours is low and dull."

"No, no, do not contradict me, I can smell a rat. I saw at once that he was simulating. From what government do you come?"

The patient listened attentively.

"Government? From the Government of Perm!" he exclaimed.

"From Perm," the chief surgeon drawled out. "Do you see? This is an important confirmation: according to statistics, the inhabitants of the Government of Perm occupy the leading place in appealing to diseases of the ear for the purpose of being free from military service."

"I do not know about that. But, to judge from his story, he certainly is not simulating," Shántser retorted. "Was there a running from the ear? No, there was not. Deafness did not develop immediately after the fall, but gradually, and at first there was only a noise in the ears. Only a specialist in diseases of the ear, and not a peasant, could simulate in this manner."

"No, no, no. An unquestionable malingerer!" the chief surgeon said, decidedly. "You civil surgeons do not know the conditions of military service, and you are in the habit of believing every patient. That's where they get the best of you. Humanitarianism is out of place here."

We disputed with him violently. The deafness of the patient was certain. But let us assume that it was merely probable to a certain degree,—what crime the chief surgeon took upon himself in sending to the front a deaf soldier, who, besides, was also lame. But the more we insisted, the more did the chief surgeon stick to his opinion: he had an "inner conviction," that imperturbable "inner conviction," which is in no need of facts, and depends on the sense of smell, such as detectives lay claim to.

The soldier was returned to the regiment.

The more I examined "the peculiarities of the military-medical service," the more clear it became to me that these peculiarities, partly through natural selection, partly through the reconstruction of the human soul, were bound to produce a particular type of surgeon.

A soldier is drafted into service by force, and is not connected with his business by any interests, hence he naturally will pretend that he is sick. Now the surgeon approaches the sick man, not with the idea of helping him, but with the question as to whether or not he is simulating. This necessity of constantly acting

the detective by degrees transforms the soul of the surgeon, and develops in it an attitude of suspicion, a desire "to catch," "to trip" the patient. There is worked out a profound hostile distrust of sick soldiers in general. "Malingering" is a permanent word in the lexicon of a military surgeon; for him his patient is, above all, a malingerer, and the contrary has to be proved. Dr. Khéysin tells in the above-mentioned article a story about a military surgeon: this surgeon gave the soldiers his "mixture," which consisted of such doses of emetics as would cause no vomiting, but would only give a predisposition for vomiting. "If the sick man is a malingerer, he won't come a second time, and he will warn other people!" I have already told how our Army was swamped by soldiers ordered back from the hospitals, who, according to the testimony of the Commander-in-Chief, "were either totally unfit for service, or who had not yet completely recovered from diseases." Laymen saw that these were sick people; but to a surgeon, who was obfuscated by his "experience," which had destroyed his soul, all these were malingerers only. It is obvious that the same prejudice about the malingering quality of the Russian soldier existed in the head of Dr. Vrédién when he composed his shameless circular.

Another "peculiarity of the militaro-medical service" consisted in the fact that there existed the most unnatural relations between the surgeon and the patient. The surgeon appeared as "the authority," and was obliged to say "thou" to the patient and to receive as a reply the senseless "So it is, sir," "Not at all, sir," "At your service, sir." The surgeon was surrounded by a useless, senseless atmosphere of that reverent, specifically military awe which so ruins the officers, and causes them to look upon the soldiers as inferior beings. How easily and how rapidly this atmosphere intoxicates a man, is shown by a characteristic polemic epi-

sode which displayed itself during the war, on the pages of *The Russian Surgeon*.

In the Twelfth Movable Field Hospital, a Mrs. Dr. A. Bek acted in the capacity of a supernumerary Sister of Mercy. Once, during the march, Assistant Supervisor Rutýshev beat a soldier. In the evening, during the stop, perturbed Mrs. Bek reported the matter to the chief surgeon of the hospital, Dr. Arístov. The chief surgeon tried to pay no attention, while the supervisor justified his assistant. "Seeing that the conversation was coming to an end," writes Mrs. Bek, "I asked whether a soldier had a right to complain. Then Dr. Arístov coarsely shouted at me, 'That is none of your business! You have no right to interfere in other people's affairs! If you do not like the way our hospital is run, you may leave it!'" This all ended with Mrs. Bek's compulsory departure. She told of the incident in a letter to *The Russian Surgeon*. In reply, four junior surgeons of the same hospital, Drs. A. Vértgeym, Daniléýko, Kabanóv, and L. Frantsúzov, sent a letter to the same *Russian Surgeon* (1905, No. 34). "The immediate cause of Dr. A. Bek's conflict with the chief surgeon," they wrote, "was, after the discussion of the fact of the soldier's punishment itself, the untimely and improper question of Dr. A. Bek in the presence of the orderlies: 'Has this soldier a right to complain?'—a question embodied in the form of a caution and almost a threat, that, if the soldier has a right to complain, she would not leave the matter alone." The authors of the letter declare that, "of course," this incident could not change their good relation to the chief surgeon, since "in this incident S. A. Arístov is no more, if not less, guilty, for his excited nerves, than Dr. A. Bek for her improper form of question."

The junior surgeons of the hospital were from the reserve, consequently the authors of the letter had

worn the military uniform for but a few months; and yet how rapidly they had adapted themselves to the specifically military order, how swiftly they had adopted in respect to the soldiers that particular attitude which is to be taken with regard to other men! A man is beaten. Those who are obliged to protect him, keep quiet. And suddenly—just think of it!—Mrs. Bek permits herself the improper tactlessness, as “a caution, and almost a threat,” of teaching a man how to enter a complaint! And that, too, in the presence of other soldiers, who, for all you know, may remember that they are men, and, having their ears boxed, may ask for redress from the offender!

This “experienced” military surgeon, who keeps silent where it would be necessary to burst out in anger for the lawless act committed, these young surgeons, who are indignant at the “untimely” intercession—it was these who, in the place of a friendly surgeon, stood at the bed of the sick soldier. We were to our patients “Your Honor,” and it took great efforts in a well-meaning surgeon to keep the patients from noticing the perfectly useless uniform of the surgeon which persistently flitted before their eyes.

In the above-mentioned circular, Dr. Vrédén recommends emphatically to the surgeons under his charge, not to waste medicaments “frivolously,” and to turn for aid to the Red Cross “only in cases of real necessity.” To an outsider it is very hard to understand why the militaro-medical department was so afraid to be under obligation to the Red Cross. In reality, these institutions had the same common aim—of bringing surgical aid to one and the same Russian Army. What wrong or impropriety was there, then, if these institutions showed each other the broadest possible mutual aid?

The surgeons themselves could not for a long time

familiarize themselves with the idea that the two governmental departments which attended to the medical business of the Army were not fraternal institutions, but two mutually hostile camps. In case of necessity, the surgeons continued to apply to the stores of the Red Cross, unable to comprehend the essence of Dr. Vrédén's cautioning references to "a real necessity." Then the Militaro-Medical Inspector, Dr. Gorbatsévich, issued the following circular:

"The Chief Militaro-Medical Inspector, in a telegram of August 8 of this year, under No. 2344, expresses his dissatisfaction because certain surgeons of the army and hospital units turned to the institutions of the Red Cross for medicaments, dressing materials, and other medical supplies, and even surgical instruments, whereas such demands should not arise in consideration of the full supply of the field drug-store and of the temporary military stores in objects of medical necessity, such as have already been furnished, or in case of need may be furnished by order of the Chief Militaro-Medical Department. Wherefore I beg Your Excellency to command the surgeons of the army and militaro-medical institution units under your charge to ask for medical supplies in the future exclusively from the field drug-store of its divisions." (Circular of the Militaro-Medical Field Department, No. 5391.)

How this field drug-store acted is shown by a letter of a military surgeon, as printed in the newspaper, *Our Days*.

"During the whole summer we had no castor oil—we had no time to lay in a supply," writes this surgeon. "We have a so-called central field drug-store. During the whole summer, the Harbin hospitals begged in tears to be supplied with castor oil, but there was none, and the hospital that demanded a pud, received from the field drug-store a pound, whereas in the summer, on account of the diarrhoea, castor oil is daily bread for.

the hospitals. Why was there none? I shall tell you why: the field hospital wired to the factory of military-medical preparations for two thousand pounds of castor oil, but, after a considerable delay, the factory answered with the question: "What has caused such a demand?" It became necessary to write a detailed report why and wherefore. In such a correspondence three or four months passed, until, at last, instead of two thousand pounds, we received one hundred, and the summer had meantime almost come to an end. A mass of the most necessary objects are lacking, while others are prepared in quantities ten times larger than necessary. Thus, for example, there is a terrible lack of gauze dressings, while there is an endless supply of gypsum dressings. To meet the lack, our medical department concocted the following combination: if a hospital demands a hundred gauze dressings, they supply twenty-five gauze and seventy-five gypsum dressings; but gypsum dressings cannot in any way take the place of gauze dressings, so the hospitals got ahead of the medical department in the following manner: if they needed one hundred gauze dressings, they ordered from the field drug-store four hundred, and thus received the desired quantity. Thanks to this, one may find in any hospital, in all the nooks where there is a free spot, gypsum dressings by the thousand. What a mass of papers the hospitals have to write before they can get anything from the field drug-store!" (Quoted from *The Practical Surgeon*, 1905, No. 3.)

There was the one Russian Army. The medical needs of this Army were attended to by an enormous mass of institutions of every kind, and these institutions were almost in no way connected with one another. The military-medical department. The Red Cross. The social organizations of the county, of the



city, of the nobility. A layman would have great difficulty in understanding what these separate institutions were for. A plan of a militaro-medical organization in the theatre of war assumes no accessory aid, and exhausts all the sides of the matter; and I affirm positively that the surgical forces in the militaro-medical department sufficed amply, and might easily have satisfied all the medical needs of the Army with their own means,—under a proper management, of course. It would seem that common sense said: what is the use of founding new and not at all inexpensive medical centres and departments, and what is the use of paying liberal salaries to a mass of “voluntary” surgeons and assistants, when there are enough of them in the military department? Would it not have been more sensible to turn these tens of millions of money straight into the hands of the militaro-medical authorities for the improvement and expansion of military institutions already in existence?

But such considerations, which are based on perfectly clear and obvious data, in reality could only provoke a smile: all this would be very easy, simple, and reasonable, if there were any faith in the governmental accomplisshers of the medical destinies of the Army. But there was and could be no faith in them, and society said: “What we give of our own free will, we shall expend ourselves, and not entrust to you.” Thus a mass of money was spent unproductively, in order at least to make proper use of the other half. It is true that, to a certain extent, there were considerations here which had nothing in common with the war. During Plehve’s terrible régime, the Liberals wanted to make use of the county organizations for the aid of the wounded, in order to create, at least on this basis, a possibility of that union of the county forces which Plehve opposed at all costs. It is another question, whether or not those hundreds of thousands

which the Zémstvos donated for the organization from their hungry and illiterate Governments, were justified by the desire for this union. In my opinion they were not. None the less, irrespective of the sums expended, the activity of the social organizations in the war was very fruitful, as we shall see, thanks to that very fact that these organizations depended but little on the militaro-medical authorities. The government—that majestic something which did not admit even a shadow of doubt of its infallibility—at the same time accepted, as something perfectly natural, that distrust of society towards itself, and suffered along with it the independent work of the social forces.

Thus stood the matter with the social organizations. Having made clear the general situation, everybody could understand their separate existence. But totally hopeless would be an attempt to understand the existence of the separate Red Cross. Like the militaro-medical department, it was also a governmental institution and was exempt from social control. It derived its support partly from donations to the government, partly from obligatory revenues—railway tickets, and so forth. Why were not these sums directly entrusted to the militaro-medical department, since the government had faith in it? What was the use in these fabulous sums paid out to all kinds of plenipotentiaries and inspectors-general, this maintenance of a multitudinous “voluntary” medical and economic personnel?

And thus there came about the amazing phenomenon that two government departments worked in the Army at one and the same thing, while their mode of life afforded no comparison. It was as though two strange men were living side by side, one rich and luxurious, the other poor and in want. In the Red Cross there was luxury: it made a display of the newest medical appliances and means, which were expensive, and fre-

quently offensively superfluous, while in the military hospitals there were not even the most necessary things,—there were no sterilizers for the dressing material, and no supply of tincture of opium, no adonis. At the Red Cross the stores almost collapsed under the weight of boxes of expensive, rare wines. In my presence an officer in the car presented to his chance fellow travellers a bottle apiece of excellent Martelli cognac. His fellow travellers were reluctant in accepting them, but the officer said good-naturedly:

“Don’t have any compunction. I have a whole box of them. My friend, who is a student of medicine, is serving with the Red Cross!”

There were, obviously, enormous supplies there; expensive wines were given away to friends by the box! But with us in the military hospitals there was a great lack of common brandy, whereas a good glassful of brandy was worth as much as the most expensive medicines to a chilled, drenched, and hungry wounded man.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GREAT STAND: DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY

TOWARDS the end of November we received a new order to move two versts to the south, to the village of M——n, where Sultánov's hospital had been stationed for almost two months without being disturbed by anybody. Again we evacuated all the patients, again we packed up the hospital, and transferred ourselves to M——n. Once more we started to fix up the farmhouses for the patients, but this time it was done on a large scale.

Previous to our arrival, a little incident occurred in Sultánov's hospital.

Sultánov had but lately entered military service, and was not in possession of any decorations. For the Sha-ho Engagement he was recommended for his first reward—a Stanislaus of the first degree, which every little official gets. But the commander of the corps was very anxious to push Sultánov ahead. He always kept Sultánov's hospital in advance of the others for this very purpose, so that in case of an engagement it might appear "in a front position," and Sultánov might be recommended for a Vladímir. The hospital was stationed in a well-to-do village which was not occupied by any military unit. It was possible to fix oneself comfortably in the numerous roomy farmhouses, and to prepare the rooms for the patients. Thus the hospital was pretty and clean, like a toy, and it was ridiculous even to compare with it the

other hospitals, which were crowded into a couple of poor, dirty farmhouses.

When everything was ready, the Corps Commander arranged matters in such a way that the Commander-in-Chief expressed his desire to inspect Sultánov's hospital. In the expectation of Kuropátkin, they cleaned, washed, and swept in the hospital every day. Near the entrance to the hall Novítskaya and Zinaída Arkádevna placed two large wreaths of evergreens.

Kuropátkin arrived, but not from the direction from which he was expected. He left his carriage in an angry mood, and did not accept the report of the chief surgeon.

"Do tell me, what kind of roads are these near your hospital! I was almost thrown out going over a hillock. How are you going to fetch the wounded over such roads?"

He entered the hall, without paying any attention to the decorations. He walked up to a shining hand-basin and raised the lid—the inside of the handbasin was dirty. He ordered a fire to be made in the stove—the stove smoked. He looked through all the rooms, then asked Sultánov:

"How many beds have you here?"

"One hundred and twenty, Your Excellency!"

"One hundred and twenty? How many beds are there supposed to be in a movable hospital?"

"Hem! Two hundred, Your Excellency," answered pale Sultánov.

"Very well. Order six hundred beds. Pay attention to the roads of approach, the stoves, and the hand-basins."

Kuropátkin drove away, not very enthusiastic. Sultánov lazily rubbed his hands, and said in his careless, sarcastic voice:

"There is trouble with the authorities. What on earth has brought him here? His Excellency wanted

to have a pleasant afternoon drive, so we have to suffer for his disappointment."

Two days later there arrived a colonel and a surgeon, who asked for Sultánov. Sultánov came out.

"We are from the Commander-in-Chief," the surgeon announced, politely. "Have his orders been carried out?"

Sultánov was confused.

"But when could I do so?"

"What do you mean?" the surgeon asked in surprise. "The Commander-in-Chief sent me yesterday, but I couldn't get here before. Have they at least started the work?"

"Yes, sir. We have written to the Staff of the Division."

"Indeed, that is not work, but scribbling. Have you done anything?"

"What can I do? I haven't any means for it."

The surgeon pensively twisted his little beard.

"Do you want me to report that way to the Commander-in-Chief?"

And they drove off.

Kuropátkin wired to the Corps Commander that he had found the hospital in absolute chaos, that he ascribed the entire blame for it to the carelessness of the persons in charge, and that he ordered him to take the most energetic measures in order to put the hospital in shape.

Sultánov pretended to be undisturbed, smiled, and said:

"I don't care! So long as they don't hang me, it's all the same to me. We all came here in order to meet with unpleasant things. One unpleasantness more or less—what difference does it make?"

In the village work began to seethe. The Corps Commander sent a company of sappers to fix the roads and the farmhouses. It was decreed that the village

was to be turned into a whole hospital town, and our hospital and division lazaretto was transferred to it. The Corps Commander managed to obtain three thousand rubles for the repair of the hospitals, and appointed Sultánov to take charge of the work.

While waiting for the farmhouses to be fixed up for our hospital, we sat without anything to do. The work soon slacked up. But the apartments for Sultánov and Novítskaya were arranged in a marvellous manner. The officers of sappers, in charge of the work, sat for days at a time in Sultánov's rooms, dined there, and kissed Novítskaya's hands.

In Sultánov's hospital there were continuous celebrations. There were constant visits from the Corps Commander, and from all kinds of generals and staff officers. Frequently Sultánov drove off with Novítskaya and Zinaída Arkádevna to dine with the commander of the corps.

In the hospital, Novítskaya was in full, uncontrolled command. She scolded the soldiers and returned them to the line with the connivance of the chief surgeon. The soldiers of the detachment were obliged to stand at attention before her. The surgeons thought it impossible for Novítskaya to carry out their commands; she ignored them completely. There were constant conflicts between them.

Novítskaya was a senior Sister in the hospital, but instead of attending to the sick, she looked after the hospital in general. The meals for the patients were usually ordered in the evening. Once a surgeon forgot in the evening to order the meals. The Sister in charge came in the morning to Novítskaya for eggs and milk.

"You have no written order, so I won't let you have it!"

The surgeon wrote out the order, and the Sister came with it for a second time to Novítskaya.

"Tell your doctor that he will get neither milk nor eggs. He must write the orders in proper time!" exclaimed Novítskaya.

The Sister returned to the hall and told the surgeon. The surgeon drooped his head in perplexity. Senior Surgeon Vasílev entered the hall. The surgeon informed him of "Her Majesty's" refusal and asked him what to do. Were the patients to go hungry? Just at that moment, Novítskaya entered the room.

"Here is the Sister," Vasílev said. "Please give the patients milk and eggs at once!"

"I told you that you would get nothing. Next time write your orders in the evening!"

Vasílev's small black eyes rolled fiercely.

"Madam, do you understand what you are saying? Sister, I am the senior surgeon, and I command you to give milk and eggs to the sick at once!"

"You will get neither milk nor eggs!" Novítskaya blurted out, and left the room, banging the door.

The sick soldiers looked up in amazement. Vasílev went to the chief surgeon. Sultánov was drinking coffee with some colonel.

"Sir Chief Surgeon! Please tell me, is it by your order that the weak patients are to be starved to-day?"

"What is it? What's the matter?" Sultánov said, frowning. "What nonsense you speak!"

He ordered milk and eggs for the patients.

The detachment of Sultánov's hospital went hungry. Our chief surgeon grabbed everything in sight, but he and the supervisor looked after the detachment and the horses. Sultánov stole just as much as he forged documents, but he did not look after a soul. The soldiers' food was disgusting, and they lived in cold rooms. The horses of the baggage train looked like skin-covered skeletons. The supervisor beat the soldiers mercilessly. They entered a complaint with Sul-



tánov. Sultánov stamped his feet, and shouted at the soldiers.

"Don't you know the order of things? You must enter complaints through the supervisor!"

In accordance with the amazing military rules, if I complain against my chief, I must hand in the complaint to him? The bolder of the soldiers went to the supervisor, explained to him their trouble, and asked him to forward the complaint higher up.

"I'll show you a complaint! I'll show you 'higher up!'" answered the supervisor, beating the complainants with a knout.

The soldiers constantly saw generals celebrating in the hospitals, and they knew how useless it was to expect any protection from them. So they walked about gloomily, silently, always looking unkempt, and presenting a sorry sight.

Sultánov's hospital began to become famous, not only in the corps, but in the whole Army. They told everywhere of Sultánov's and Novítskaya's exploits, and of their almighty power. Behind their backs they cursed them, but in their presence they were polite and attentive. No laws, no orders existed for Sultánov. Orders kept constantly arriving in our institutions from the staff of the corps, now to send to the staff a dozen carts for the hauling of provender and fuel, now to transfer to the staff from the economic sums a few hundred rubles, for the purchase of stereotubes or American wagons. Naturally all the institutions immediately carried out the orders, but Sultánov left them even without a reply.

The personnel of the division lazaretto, which had also been transferred to our village, had fixed up a farmhouse superbly for its quarters: they put up a fine stove, papered the ceiling with white paper and the walls with golden matting, and put window-panes

into the windows. Sultánov and Novítskaya once entered the house. They looked at it in surprise and curiosity, and admired it greatly. Two days later, there suddenly came an order from the corps for the division lazaretto to move from M——n to East Chenhou-zu. It was an unnecessary, senseless change, only one verst further to the north. It was clear to everybody that it was the doing of Sultánov and Novítskaya, who had taken a liking to the farmhouse.

"What more does she want? As it is, she is living almost in a palace," said the expelled surgeons, in annoyance.

Once the Division Surgeon received a paper from Sultánov. In this paper Sultánov wrote that "in accordance with the Corps Commander's personal order, he recommended the Sisters of Mercy of his hospital for decoration: Sisters Novítskaya and Bulánina (Zinaída Arkádevna) for gold medals on an Anna ribbon, "for zealous and self-sacrificing attention to the wounded in the engagement near the River Sha-ho"; two other Sisters who had really worked zealously and with self-sacrifice, Sultánov recommended for silver medals on a Stanislaus ribbon, simply "for attending to the wounded."

This recommendation provoked even our division surgeon, a decrepit, egotistical man, with the soul of an official, who thought only of himself. He added on the paper a note that, in his opinion, Sister Valézhnikova (Vyéra Nikoláevna) also deserved a gold medal, the more so since in attending to the sick she had contracted typhoid fever.

"But there is no reason to recommend Novítskaya for a gold medal," his assistant remarked to him. "Everybody knows that she doesn't even see the patients, but only drives out to the staff for dinner. A silver medal will do for her!"

The assistant of the division surgeon was a man

with a soul. He twisted his decrepit and stupid patron as he willed; but now, for the first time during their whole joint service, the division surgeon flashed his eyes and yelled at him:

"That is none of your business! Please keep quiet!"

Having learned of Sultánov's recommendations, our chief surgeon hastened to recommend his Sisters, also, for medals,—the senior Sister, who already had a silver medal for service in Russia, for a gold medal, the others for silver medals.

The recommendations were attended to at once, only Vyéra Nikoláevna, I think, got only a silver medal. Novítskaya, who all the time lived in the "higher spheres," haughtily ignored the opinions of the other Sisters, but Zinaída Arkádevna felt embarrassed. She ran in to see our Sisters, to inform them that she had received a gold medal. Beaming with joy, she was provoked because our Sisters had been given silver medals, "whereas all had worked alike." She explained it in this way, that women of the nobility are supposed to get gold medals, while burgher women get silver medals.

"This is simply shocking!" She tried to act the liberal. "Well, let that pass. So long as there is such a law, you can't help it. But why did Sultánov give Novítskaya and me a better recommendation than the other Sisters? Haven't we all worked alike? I really can't endure such injustice!" And immediately, transported with joy, she added: "Now, I must arrange matters in such a way as to receive a medal on a St. George ribbon, otherwise it wasn't worth while coming here!"

Christmas Eve arrived. The Japanese threw notes into our trenches, informing us that the Russians might calmly celebrate the holiday, that the Japanese would not trouble or disturb them. Of course, nobody

believed the sly Asiatics. Everybody expected a sudden night attack. In the night we received a telegraphic order: in view of the expected engagement, the two chief surgeons of the hospitals were to go to the division lazaretto immediately, each taking with them two junior surgeons and two Sisters. Our division lazaretto had for some days been moved from Chen-hou-zu some four versts to the south, to the positions themselves.

The order presented a flagrant case of lawlessness: the chief surgeon of a hospital may, under no circumstances, be ordered away from his hospital, once it is established. In the given circumstances this transfer of the chief surgeons to the positions was a straight piece of stupidity: if a severe engagement were ahead, there would be a great deal to do, not only in the division lazarettos, but also in the hospitals. How, then, could the hospitals be left without the chief surgeons? Besides, it was quite uncertain whether any additional surgeons would be required in the lazaretto, or whether there would be any engagement at all.

The affair left no doubts: Sultánov needed a Vladímir with the swords, and Novítskaya and Zinaída Arkádevna wanted medals on St. George ribbons. Had Sultánov been ordered there, with the two ladies, that would have attracted too much attention. So half of the medical personnel of the two hospitals was moved "to the positions."

It had long been dark, and we drove out with lanterns. The night was calm, and as warm as in spring. There was no snow. We arrived in the division lazaretto and began to drink tea. Everybody laughed and made witty remarks at this fantastic order. Sultánov arrived with his two surgeons, but without the Sisters.

"Where are your Sisters?"

"They have gone to the Christmas tree at the Corps Commander's," replied Sultánov.

It was true, Novítskaya and Zinaída Arkádevna had

gone to the Christmas tree, but why did Sultánov not take the other two Sisters? It did not even occur to any one to put this question, because everybody knew that if anybody were to come here, it would be Novítskaya and Zinaída Arkádevna. Yet the order was perfectly definite, as to coming with Sisters.

About nine o'clock a solitary shot was fired, then a second, and soon a mad, intermittent fire developed in our positions. The guns roared heavily. Everybody grew silent—something terrible was taking place. The rifle fire spread further and further, the cannon rumbled, and projectiles were carried whistling into the distance.

We were getting ready to receive the wounded, but no wounded were brought. The firing resounded madly and feverishly, and excited orderlies galloped by in the darkness. In the Japanese positions, a projectile flashed, and a bluish beam slowly crept up on our positions.

And still we got no wounded. Towards midnight the firing ceased. We lay down to sleep, and in the morning returned home. The unusual mobilization of the hospital personnel "in the position" turned out to be absolutely unnecessary.

By the way, I will tell all about this firing.

One of the most ludicrous incidents in the whole war, which in general was so rich in humor, had taken place. There reigned a profound conviction that on that night the Japanese would do something to us, and every one's nerves were strained. The Rifle Division of one of our regiments heard a light, reiterated, spreading tramping from the Japanese front, rapidly coming nearer in the darkness. The Rifle Division opened fire. We are assured that it was a herd of Chinese pigs, which had escaped from a corral, and was running wild in the field. The fire of the Rifle Division was taken up by the battalion that was lo-

cated in the trenches; from there the fire was communicated to the neighboring units, and the alarm was given to the batteries—and then the cannonading began. The officers who were in the craters at that time told me that flickering lines of fire from the rifle discharges could be seen hovering over the trenches. The commander of the battalion which had indicated the approach of the swine sent the following telegram to the commander of the regiment: "I am unable to hold out any longer! Send me reinforcements!" (Many officers gave me their word of honor this was a fact.) They began to explode fougasses. One was exploded, but the other exploded of itself.

It was then that all burned with shame: the fire of the explosions lighted up a desert all about. Nowhere was there an enemy. Meanwhile, the Japanese began to reply from their trenches, their projector was lit up, and in surprise they began to play the light on our positions, which were firing madly.

In Kuropátkin's most humble telegram to the Emperor this incident was explained in the following manner:

"On the night of December 24, the Japanese began to worry us on the front of the central unit of our positions. Having been discovered in time by our guards, they were met by an artillery and rifle fire, and, after an exchange of shots, they retreated. Our wounded are one supernumerary lieutenant and seventeen of the rank and file; and three of the rank and file were killed."

Kuropátkin forgot to add that they were killed and wounded by Russian bullets. The men who suffered happened to be in advance of the trenches in look-outs and hiding-places, and the whole storm of the bullets came down upon them.

One of the officers, who was somewhat of a wag, assured us that there were also Japanese who had

suffered on that memorable night: the scouts found in the hostile trenches the corpses of a few Japanese who had burst from laughter.

Once a few severely wounded soldiers were brought in from a neighboring hospital to our village. Their wounds were terrible: one had both his arms torn off, another had his abdomen laid open, and the rest had broken arms and legs and crushed heads. This is the way they were wounded. The regiment had arrived from the positions to take a rest in the village. A soldier had brought with him an unexploded Japanese shrapnel, which he had picked up on the positions. The soldiers crowded together in the yard of the farmhouse, and began to examine the projectile. They turned it, they kicked it, and they began to twist off the distance tube. Naturally, an explosion followed. Three were killed on the spot, and eleven were heavily wounded. Three or four soldiers, who happened to pass by on their way to the quartermaster for some felt boots, also suffered. Some fifteen men thus met their ruin. What for? For "an unfortunate accident"?

No, it was not an unfortunate accident. If blind men are permitted to run over a field that has pitfalls dug in it, it will not be an unfortunate accident if they keep falling into the holes. Now the Russian soldiers were in that condition precisely, and catastrophes were unavoidable.

The whole war was one continuous series of such catastrophes. It became perfectly clear that, in order to be victorious in a modern war, the soldier must show, not the strength of a bull, not the bravery of a lion, but a well-developed human intelligence. This is precisely what the Russian soldiers did not have. Strikingly superb in their unlimited bravery, in their iron endurance, they were pitiful and irritating be-

cause of their lack of training and because of their mental sloth. Even if the whole organization of our Army presented a marvellously well constructed and admirably working machine—in reality, this machine was remarkably clumsy and unfit for work—this ignorance of the soldiers would be like sand which clogs the wheels of the machine.

“What is the name of this village?”

“We do not know, sir.”

“How long have you been stationed here?”

“Four months, sir.”

The Chinese have been deported, there is no one from whom to get the information, the affair demands haste, and the messenger looks helplessly at the map, unable to determine whether he is going in the right direction or not.

“Somewhere about here must be the village of Liu-do-hou. Do you know where it is?”

“No, sir.”

The messenger travels on and blunders about. At last it turns out that the village about which he asked the soldiers is that very Liu-do-hou!

The soldiers themselves wandered helplessly in the locality, unable to make use of a compass or to read a map. In the engagement, where the former gregarious column broke up into broad chains of men acting independently and feeling separately, our soldiers lost themselves and were disheartened. If an officer dropped out of the line, a hundred men were turned into nothing, and did not know whither to move, or what to do.

Between the positions, behind the positions, everywhere, treacherous, intangibly ruinous work was being done. In a moment of need the most necessary appliances turned out to be spoiled. They were hunting the Chinamen, caught them, chopped off their heads. But what did the Chinamen have to do with



it? The majority of the important, essential cases of treason were not committed by Chinese malice at all, but by Russian ignorance itself. Let the official accounts speak for themselves.

"The poles and cables of the military telegraph, which are placed in the regions of military activity, are frequently subject to destruction by the troops and baggage-trains. Thus, for example, it has been observed that the troops have bivouacked near the very lines of the telegraph, and once a fire was started on the cable itself. Horses were tied to the telegraph poles. Cossacks, riding, tore the wires with their lances. The cattle which were driven over the field for the day's food broke down the poles and tore the wires. In examining a cable which was attached to trees, it was discovered that it was fastened to branches which had been sawed off, and that the cable itself had been injured. It was also found that the insulating covering had been cut through, and the wire laid entirely bare; which, no doubt, was done out of curiosity. The Commander-in-Chief requests that attention be directed to this," and so forth. (Order of the Commander-in-Chief, November 14, 1904, No. 69.)

"It has been noticed that the destruction of telegraph poles by the baggage-trains and mounted foragers still continues, in spite of the repeated orders to the military authorities to take strict measures against it. Daily complaints about the interruption of telegraph communication are received, as a result of the careless treatment of the telegraph lines by the troops. Carts, transports, and large bales frequently pass by the side of the main roads, hitting against and breaking the poles. The Commander-in-Chief orders again that attention be directed," and so forth. (Order of the Commander-in-Chief, December 5, 1904, No. 168.)

"It has been observed that in the region in the south of Su-ya-tun Station, which is in our hands, the road-bed of the railway is constantly destroyed by our men of the rank and file, who carry off the sleepers from under whole rail paths. The same careless attitude and absence of consciousness of harm done appears among the men of the rank and file in relation to the lines of the field telegraph, bridges, dams, and other technical constructions, the building and maintenance of which cost enormous sums and efforts." (Order to the troops of the Third Manchurian Army, January 1, 1905, No. 15.)

Month after month dragged by. Two enormous armies stood motionless, facing each other. Both fortified and entrenched themselves persistently. By degrees there arose opposite each other, as it were, two long fortresses, dozens of versts long, impregnable, and supplied with heavy siege-guns. Everywhere could be seen trenches, redoubts, lunettes, which were connected by subterranean passages. Both armies dug themselves into the ground like moles, thousands of eyes peered out of the ditches, and every incautious man was immediately met by a shower of bullets. It was cold, and the men froze in the trenches. The legs swelled from constant standing and the leg muscles were atrophied. Upon leaving the trenches the soldiers swayed like drunken men. In the positions existed cold, privations, and idleness, with a constant nervous tension from the imminent danger; behind the positions, at the stations, there was endless drunkenness and desperate gambling. The same happened in the miserable Mukden restaurants. In the streets of Mukden, Chinese children invited the officers to "a Chinese madam," who, they assured the officers, was "heap shango." And the candidates waited in the yard of the farmhouse for hours for their turn to lie

down with the dirty, painted, fourteen-year-old Chinese girl.

The Army was in a gloomy and sombre mood. Hardly any one looked for a victory. The officers tried to give themselves courage, figured out by how many thousand bayonets our army increased each month, and put their hope in the Baltic Squadron and Port Arthur. Port Arthur capitulated. Nogi's delivered army moved for a union with Oyama. The morale kept falling, and peace was desired; but the officers said:

"How can we return home? We might just as well take off our uniforms, for it will be a disgrace to appear in the streets!"

There were a considerable number of officers who would not even listen to peace. They had their peculiar military "honor," which demanded a continuation of the war.

The soldiers had no such "honor"; they could not comprehend the war at all, and in vain tried to get some explanation for it.

"Your Honor, what is this war about?" a soldier would ask an officer.

"It's the Japs' fault! We didn't want it! They attacked us first!"

"Yes, sir. But why should they attack us without any cause?"

Silence.

"They say that this war is about Manchuria. What do we want with it? We would not like to live here, if it were given to us! As we were travelling through Siberia, we saw a lot of land, there is no end to it!"

The position of those who desired "to uphold the spirit of the Army" was becoming exceedingly difficult. It was impossible to discover anything which would fire the soul with the desire for heroism, with the desire to struggle for something high and glorious.

At the staff of the Commander-in-Chief they published a special little paper, *The Messenger of the Manchurian Armies*. This paper, whose problem it was to play the rôle of a Tyrtæus of the Russian Army, was amazing for its incapacity, its lying, its absence of fire and inspiration. The governmentally over-sweet phrases about faith, Tsar, and country, about the honor of the native land, endless and heedless boasting,—that was to feed the spirit of those who were participating in a titanic struggle, where the cannonading caused the clouds to gather in the disturbed air, and where whole plains were covered with bloody carpets of corpses. I shall have to quote this truly remarkable paper more than once.

This is the way the patriotic authors wrote in pamphlets which were scattered in great numbers among the soldiers. Before me lies an elegantly published book, with pretty illustrations, bearing the title: *In Besieged Port Arthur, or the Heroic Death of Private Dmítri Fómin*. The story begins as follows:

“No, Brother Jap, you can’t get out of my embrace! You will now taste Russian cabbage soup and porridge,—it’s an A-1 dish!”

“Thus thought Private Dmítri Fómin, sitting in his lurking place with his gun primed, and watching a Japanese scout.

“The Japanese is crawling over the rocks, in danger of falling down at any moment. ‘It isn’t easy for the Jap, either,’ thought Fómin, ‘for he, too, carries out the commands of his superior.’ Indeed he was sorry for the Jap. At any other time Fómin would have helped him to reach the top, but now, since he was ready to carry out the commands of his own authorities and to do their will, he impatiently waited for the Japanese to get close enough to him so that he could suddenly throw himself upon him and capture him.”

Poor Russian Army, poor, poor Russian people! So this was to fire them with the desire to struggle and do heroic deeds,—the wish to do the will of the authority. But the patriotic author is wrong in assuming that the Japanese only “carry out the commands of their superiors.” No, this fire does not heat up the soul and inflame the heart! The souls of the Japanese burned with a glowing fire, they were eager for death, and died smiling, happy, and proud.

Nemírovich-Dánchenko says that once, during a private conversation, Kuropátkin remarked: “Yes, one must admit that, at the present time, wars are not waged by governments, but by nations!” Anybody who had eyes and ears, had to admit that. Those times, when the Russian “saintly cattle” crawled up the Alps after Suvórov, astonishing the world by their senseless heroism—those times have gone irretrievably.

Every day they brought wounded men to our hospital. There was an amazing number of men who were wounded in the hand, especially the right hand. At first, we took this to be accident, but the unusual regularity of such wounds soon attracted attention. The surgeon’s assistant comes and reports:

“Your Honor, we have brought five wounded men.”

“Are they wounded in the hand?”

“Yes, sir,” answers the assistant, restraining a smile.

You ask a soldier under what conditions he was wounded. He is embarrassed and confused. “I stretched out my hand for a blade of grass,” “I put out my hand to get the cartridges from the breastwork.” To the Sisters, in whose presence they were less embarrassed, they told outright:

“This is the way it happened. I just raised my hands and shot, and it hit me in the hand. If I had put out my head, I would have caught it in the head!”

The Chief Commander of the Rear writes in one of his orders:

"A large number of the rank and file have been received at the hospitals, who have wounds on their fingers. Of these there are twelve hundred who have only the index finger wounded. The absence of the index finger on the right hand frees a man from military service. Hence, considering the fact that the fingers are well protected during the firing by the trigger-shield, there is reason to assume an intentional injury to the fingers. In view of the above, the Commander-in-Chief has ordered an investigation, so as to bring the guilty persons before the law."

The soldiers lived merely in the expectation of peace. The expectation was impassionate, tense, with an almost mystical faith in the nearness of the desired and delayed "peace-making." The moment "Hurrah!" was heard at the station the soldiers of all the surrounding units became excited and in agitation asked:

"What is this? The peace-making?"

One morning in the middle of January, my orderly servant said to me:

"The war will come to an end on the twenty-seventh," and he smiled enigmatically.

"A year from now?" I smiled.

"Not at all, sir. This very month," he replied, with self-assurance.

Then he told me a story. In the Krómski Regiment there was a prophetic soldier. He informed his comrades that the war would end exactly a year after its beginning, on January 27, 1905. The commander of the company heard of this prediction and put the prophet for three hours under arms. The commander of the regiment passed by, and he asked: "What are you standing for?" "For the truth, Your Honor!" "For what truth?" The soldier told him. "Well, tell the commander of your company that he should add another three hours under arms from me!" "No, Your Honor, do not offend me, but listen to what I have

to tell you. There is a letter at the post-office for you, and in this letter it says that your brother in Russia has died." The statement proved correct. The colonel went and told Kuropátkin about it. Kuropátkin summoned the soldier, and began to stamp his feet and shout at him; but the soldier said: "Your Excellency, in your right pocket there is a box of matches, and in it there are forty-two matches." Kuropátkin counted the matches—the number was correct. He ordered the soldier to stay with him. "If things happen as you predict," says he, "I will promote you to the rank of officer; if not, I'll have you shot!"

I went to the hospital. The wounded and the sick were speaking with animation and asking about the soldier's prediction. Quicker than the light which finds its way into darkness, the prediction spread throughout the army. In the trenches, in the dug-outs, in the bivouacks near the fires—everywhere the soldiers spoke with joyous faces of the announced nearness of the peace-making. The authorities were disturbed. Rumor had it that those who were talking of peace would be hanged.

"Well, there won't be ropes enough," the soldiers said, smiling.

We ridiculed the prophecy, but—such is human nature—everybody wanted peace so much that, in spite of the obvious fact, an intangible joyous expectation nonetheless lived in the depths of the soul. And there were rumors which strengthened this expectation. It was said that the commissariat had ordered the requisition papers to be presented three months ahead and not six months ahead as was done before. The troops were ordered not to lay in any provisions, but to use up the canned goods. The German Emperor, they said, visited daily now the Russian, now the Japanese ambassador. They no longer sent new troops from Russia. They insisted that the January

flank attack at San-de-pu had been undertaken by orders from St. Petersburg, for the purpose of trying luck for the last time. They lost fifteen thousand men, and were unable to take a single village. It was figured out that, if the battle were to develop along the whole front, we should lose hundreds of thousands of men without any results—and they began negotiations about peace. In April, the rumors said, we would return home.

January 27 arrived, and, of course, there was no peace. We laughed and reminded the soldiers of the sooth-sayer. They were confused, and scratched themselves behind the ears.

"I guess he was mistaken!"

It was a bitter disappointment. Now new rumors developed: it was decided to organize a new army of three hundred thousand men for Korea, and to build an enormous new fleet. And Japan figured on fighting during the whole of the year of 1905.

A heavy, painful sensation depressed every soul.

A large number of officers now came to the hospitals. In one of our regiments, which had not yet participated in any battle, twenty per cent. of the personnel of officers dropped out "on account of sickness." With naïve cynicism officers came to consult us privately, to see whether they could not be transported on account of this or that venereal disease.

"You see, I've been here ever since September, and I'm sick of it. I want to get back to Russia!"

One of the adjutants of our division staff, who had volunteered for the war, asked to be transported.

"What did you come here for?"

"We were all convinced that the war would end in October, that it would be something like the Chinese war. It looked profitable to go for the sake of promotion."



On the day that I was in charge of the hospital a tall, handsome captain came to see me.

"Good morning, doctor," he said to me in a heavy, lordly bass, offering me his hand. "I have come to lie in your hospital."

"What ails you?"

"You see, it is like this: I am no longer a young man, and I am married and spoiled. I have property in Moscow. I absolutely cannot endure it here any longer! The conditions in these trenches and dug-outs are so anti-sanitary that it is impossible to stand it any longer. I began to cough and I have pains in my legs. Of course, I am not in the least afraid of bullets and projectiles, but, you know, it is no particular pleasure to catch rheumatism for the rest of my life. Be so kind as to have me transported to Harbin. There I have a good Moscow friend on the Evacuation Commission, and there I'll fix it up myself."

When there was a rumor of an impending battle, the flow of officers which streamed to the hospital increased greatly. About these "heroes of peace times" a whole doggerel spread through the army.

The order came to go ahead—  
To hospitals they go instead.  
It is a fine campaign!  
It is a fine campaign!  
A Shimose just whizzed by,  
It didn't touch me! It flew high—  
But I have a contusion!  
But I have a contusion!  
I'll get my paper by and by,  
Up north and home forthwith I'll fly.  
The south does not agree with me!  
The south does not agree with me!

The commanders, seeing the flight of the officers, were furious. There arrived at the hospital a staff captain with chronic gastro-intestinal catarrh. To

his sanitary sheet was attached a piece of paper with the following note from the regimental commander:

"It is my deep conviction that the staff captain is suffering from rear-mania, a disease which, I am sorry to say, is prevalent among the officers. Please to have this note attached to the sanitary sheet."

It was painful to be in charge of the officers' hall. The patients wore us out with their trifling, insignificant complaints.

"Oh, yes, Doctor, I forgot to tell you," said a Moscow proprietor, in a deep, bass voice. "I observe that my arms and legs have grown awfully thin in the last two months."

Another one informed me:

"Last spring I took the cactus cure in the Crimea. Don't you think, doctor, I had better take up that cure again?"

"Doctor, this is what happens with me," a third one said: "when it is hot, I feel giddy and I have a sick headache."

"That's the way everybody feels."

"No, I have a peculiar feeling."

I often felt like stopping in the middle of the hall and bursting out into guffaws. These were warriors! All their lives they had lived off the people, and the only justification of their existence could be the very thing which they now so carefully tried to avoid. Now I no longer feel like laughing. I recall my former patients, and I think, where are they? How many battles with the disarmed people have they bravely waged in the cities and villages of Russia? How many women have they had flogged? How many men have they sentenced to capital punishment?

Once Kuropátkin suddenly arrived in our hospital. His hair was black, with a tinge of grey; his glance was intelligent and unwavering; his face, serious and gloomy. He was simple in his attitude, without a

shade of Bourbonism or of a general's manner. He was the only one of the generals here who impressed everybody without exception. His remarks were to the point, and free from arrogance.

Incidentally Kuropátkin also entered the officers' hall.

"What are you suffering from?" he said, turning to an officer.

"From general nervous breakdown, Your Excellency," replied the officer, and, hastening to make good use of the opportunity, added: "The chief of the division is trying to have me transferred to a duty outside the line."

"Who is trying?" asked Kuropátkin, slightly raising his brows.

"The chief of the division, Your Excellency."

"And what ails you?" Kuropátkin said, turning to another officer.

"I have a cold, a pain in my joints; I cough," this one said, giving a list of his ailments.

Kuropátkin drew a gentle sigh, put questions to a third and a fourth man, and silently left without bidding good-bye.

Obviously he had received an old and familiar impression. A month before he had issued the following order, full of sarcasm and irony:

"From the information received from the Sanitaro-Statistical Bureau, it appears that sickness per thousand among the lower ranks of the Army is only slightly higher than the percentage in peace times, whereas sickness amidst the officers is more than double that of the lower ranks. I direct the attention of the persons in charge to this fact. I direct the attention to this, also, that the officers, who live under better sanitary conditions, should present to the rank and file an example of a conscientious relation to the conditions for the preservation of health. It must be remem-

bered that it is prejudicious in war time to be ailing from personal carelessness." (Order of December 17, 1904, No. 305.)

Side by side with this type of gentleman, there arrived in the hospital from the front such old chronic cripples that we raised our arms in despair. There came a lieutenant-colonel who had been sent from Russia but a month ago "to complete numbers": he was deaf in one ear, breathed heavily, had chronic rheumatism, and had but five teeth in his mouth. It was painful to look at this ruin of an officer from the line, and to think of the strapping youths who were sitting in the rear and doing duties of commanders and supervisors.

Another, also a lieutenant-colonel. He was fifty-eight years old, had chronic rheumatism, catarrh of the stomach, asthma, and a weak heart; and both his eyes had twice been operated on for some trouble. A fine old man, such as one finds among old officers, modest and unpretentious.

"How can you be in active service when your health is in such a condition?" I asked in surprise.

"What's to be done? My wife begged me to ask for my discharge, but how could I do it? Only two years are left to complete my service. I have four children, and three orphan nephews on my hands. They have to be fed and dressed. I have been ailing for a long time. The commission has twice given me a certificate to the effect that I must take the cure at Stáraya Rússa, where there are some free rooms for officers. But you know that it is hard for a member of the Army to get anything without protection. The free rooms are always reserved for members of the staff, and we can't get them."

This old, old man had been suffering for three months in the trenches!

The chief surgeon had taken it upon himself to or-

der the transfer and transportation from the hospital of all the sick officers. He was terribly provoked at the "cowardice and dishonesty" of the Russian officers.

"They are simply making fun of us! I will not have these malingerers evacuated! I'll order them all back to the line!"

What really happened was this: gentle, modest men were ordered back to the front, while pompous men and such as had connections were discharged.

By the way, that impudent Moscow proprietor was transported to Harbin to his friend in the Evacuating Commission.

Once, while I was in charge for the day, I was called to the receiving-room late in the evening. Near the table, dressed in a Nikoláy fur cloak, stood Captain Count Zaráyski, the personal adjutant of our corps commander. And near him was a tall, handsome lady in a short fur coat and a white fur cap.

"Good evening, doctor," said the count. "I have come to take a cot in your hospital. On my way to Harbin I caught a cold in my ear and an abscess has formed there. I have brought you a new Sister."

He introduced us to the lady.

A new Sister? According to law, each hospital was to have four Sisters, and we had already six of them: Besides the four regular Sisters, we had the "Boy-Sister" and the officer's wife who had lately returned from Harbin after recovering from typhoid fever. All these Sisters had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do, they were all bored, and complained of ennui and lack of occupation. And here was a seventh!

The count was taken to the officers' hall, and the lady was given a bed with our Sisters.

Everybody was perplexed and provoked and wanted to know what good she would be. When the chief surgeon entered the officers' hall next morning, Count

Zaráyski asked him to take the lady whom he had brought as a supernumerary Sister into the hospital.

"She is a good friend of mine, and I went to Harbin to meet her."

The chief surgeon gave an evasive answer and went back to his room. Just then the Division Surgeon came to see him. He learned of the count's request and was beside himself.

"This will be the seventh Sister in the hospital! I will not permit it under any consideration!" he said excitedly.

"The main thing is, what do I want with her?" the chief surgeon said, agreeing with him. "As it is, I do not know what to do with my own Sisters; I do not need them!"

The supervisor poured some oil on the flame:

"How are we to transport them? Can we order special carriages for them?"

The Division Surgeon, boiling with rage, went to the hospital to see the count. One of our Sisters said slyly to the supervisor:

"I'll bet you anything that this Sister will stay here!"

"You are talking nonsense! Are they trying to make fun of us?"

The Division Surgeon came back from his visit to the count. This time he was silent, and he answered evasively the question of the chief surgeon. Upon returning home, he wrote a letter to the Chief of the Division, in which he told of the desire of the new Sister to enter our hospital, and he asked whether he should accept her. The Chief of the Division answered that he was surprised at his letter: according to law, the Division Surgeon should solve such questions on his own account, and he ought to know better than any one else whether Sisters were needed in the hospital. Then the Division Surgeon turned the matter

over to our chief surgeon. The chief surgeon accepted the Sister.

"A new burden has fallen upon our shoulders," he said in irritation to our Sisters. "How am I going to transport the whole lot of you?"

The Sisters told this to the new Sister. On meeting the chief surgeon, she said to him: "I understand that I shall embarrass you very much in moving."

"Never mind," Davýdov replied good-naturedly. "We usually move not more than five or six versts. In an extreme case, we shall move you all in two lots."

The Sisters' apartment was very small. The new Sister embarrassed them all very much with her boxes and trunks. Our Sisters were huffy, but the new Sister did not seem to notice it, and was kind and pleasant. She informed the Sisters that she was dreadfully afraid of patients and that she could not endure the sight of blood.

"I had better act in the capacity of a chamber-maid to you, and clean up and sweep out our farmhouse," she said smilingly.

The new Sister passed days at a time in the officers' hall by the count's bedside.

The whole hospital groaned and frowned at the count. Once he did not like the soup which was offered him. He sent word that, if they ever offered him such soup again, he would smash the cook's jaws. The supervisor came running to the count every hour, in order to find out whether he was all right. Once the count said: "It wouldn't be bad if I had some wine?" The supervisor immediately sent a bottle of excellent Madeira which had been donated for the use of sick people. But the count had an abscess in the external canal of the ear and, of course, there was no reference to any wine he was to get.

The count laughed at the attentions he received, and he said:

"It's a good thing that I'm not exacting, for they would be giving me champagne every day!"

Apropos of the donations. We usually had but few sick people, but the chief surgeon constantly received fine things, warm garments, wine, and filled cigarettes, from the stores of donations connected with the Red Cross. These things were given without accounting and without control, and even in larger quantities than was asked for. "Give it to somebody or other!" they would say. It was a mean, contemptible business: the stingy chief surgeon lavishly treated the friends who came to see him to cognac and Madeira, smoked the gift cigarettes, and filled the company which came to congratulate him on his birthday or name-day with free brandy.

Soon the chief surgeon turned over to the newly-arrived Sister a small farmhouse which stood to one side and had been fixed up for patients. He furnished the Sister with a separate orderly. According to law no orderlies are intended for Sisters, and ours, naturally, had none. They cleaned their own apartments, washed their own underwear, and so forth. Davýdov furnished the new Sister with a lamp and coal oil from the government stores and begged her not to spare any fuel in order to keep the farmhouse warm. The other Sisters never saw any fuel wood: their fuel consisted of kao-liang which had been used for horse bedding, mixed with manure.

The Sisters were naturally dreadfully put out about it, and they pointed out in what close quarters they lived and how spacious an apartment the newly-arrived Sister had. We advised them as follows:

"Ask the chief surgeon to have a part of you transferred to her farmhouse."

"Oh, Lord, how dull you are! She has got to live alone!"

The count regained his health soon, and was dis-



charged from the hospital. Every evening the American carriage of the corps stood until late at night near the solitary farmhouse where the new Sister was living, or a sentinel was dozing, holding by the reins two horses, the count's and his own.

Fairy Vyéra Nikoláevna, who recovered from typhoid fever in Harbin, did not care to return to Sultánov's hospital and remained as a Sister in Harbin. Her place in Sultánov's hospital was taken by the dweller in the solitary farmhouse, "the count's Sister," as the soldiers called her. In the capacity of a regular Sister she received a salary of about eighty rubles a month. She still lived in the same farmhouse, only in place of a soldier from our hospital, one from Sultánov's hospital was attending upon her.

And I thought how many active, experienced surgeons' assistants who wished to go to the war as Sisters, were refused "on account of lack of places." Meanwhile, the nation's money was spent on the maintenance of women like Novítskaya and of "count's Sisters," who could not endure the sight of blood, who did not know how to approach the patients, and who did not even wish to do so.

In our hospital lay a wounded officer from a neighboring corps. This officer was of distinguished birth and had great connections. The Corps Commander came to see him. He was an old, old man, and, as they said, with an enormous influence at court.

In our hospital there also lay a soldier from his corps, whose right arm was shattered by splinters from a shrapnel. We tried to persuade the soldier to have his arm amputated, but he would not listen to us.

"What am I going to do without an arm? Maybe it will heal up some way. I have three children."

But gangrene had already set in in the arm. When

the general left the officers' hall, our chief surgeon said to him:

"Your Excellency, a soldier from your corps is lying here. His arm should be amputated, but he will not consent to it. Maybe you can persuade him."

"Yes. Very well. Take me to him. I shall have a talk with him."

The general was taken to the soldiers' hall and to the wounded man.

"Do you know who I am?" asked the general.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"All right. The doctors tell you, and I repeat it, you have to have your arm cut off, else you will die."

The soldier was silent, and looked gloomily at the general.

"Did you understand me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Don't worry. In Petersburg the Empress has very fine artificial arms and legs. They'll give you an arm and nobody will know but that it is a real one."

The soldier was silent.

"So this is what I advise you to do, and you do it. Do you understand me? Good-bye. Can you read and write?"

"Yes, sir."

The general moved towards the entrance and said, turning to us:

"He can learn to write with his left hand."

The January engagement at San-de-pu took place. For a few days the chill air was astir from the continuous cannonading, and at twilight the fires of the bursting shells could be seen in the west. It was so cold that it was impossible to sleep in the heated farm-houses, even though we wrapped ourselves in every-

thing we could find. And there, in that bitter cold, the battle took place.

Then the cannonading stopped. It became quiet, as though all sounds had frozen. There were all kinds of stories about the past engagement. It was said that the Russians had occupied San-de-pu and the neighboring villages, but that they had later retreated with a loss of about fifteen thousand men. The picking-up of the wounded and their transportation was done even more carelessly than in the previous engagements. Only those were saved who, with their own strength, were able to crawl to the dressing-stations, while all the others froze to death. There were not enough carts nor stretchers. The wounded were transported in cold freight-cars. I was told in Mukden that in one sanitary train which arrived from the south they found thirty corpses of wounded men who had frozen to death during the journey. The Inspector of the Hospitals of the Second Army, Sólntsev, shot himself. It was rumored that he left a note in which he accused himself of negligence on account of the freezing to death of thousands of wounded. Others said that Sólntsev had lost his mind in the beginning of the engagement, and had committed suicide while temporarily insane.

The failure of the engagement was laid by some at Kuropátkin's door, while others blamed Grippenbergl, the Commander of the Second Army. They quarrelled in the presence of the whole army. There were stories of Kuropátkin's letters, which were left unanswered by Grippenbergl, and of Grippenbergl's departure from the army without the knowledge of the Commander-in-Chief. They reported the words uttered aloud by Grippenbergl at the Harbin station, that Kuropátkin was a traitor who should be turned over to court-martial. Everybody listened in amazement as Grippenbergl, in an attempt to prove his righteousness,

blurted out to the foreign correspondents the military secrets about the numbers and distribution of our troops in the theatre of war.

Parallel with this, they told of the late encounter, in the staff of the Japanese Army, between Marshal Oyama and his Chief of Staff Kodama. It was said that Kodama had boxed Oyama's ears because the Marshal had systematically claimed ideas worked out by Kodama. A storm burst forth, but immediately subsided. Oyama forgot his box on the ears, and Kodama his personal insult. They were both needed for the business, and both remained working side by side.

I do not know whether that was so, but they spoke of it with bitterness, with envy, with enthusiasm, as a sign of the great *élan* of the Japanese, of the genius of their leaders, of the education of the officers, and the training of the soldiers, of the amazing practical sense, shrewdness, and harmony of the whole organization.

Gértsen wrote long ago: "We need Europe as an ideal, as a reproach, as a fine example. If it isn't all that, we shall have to invent such a Europe." The same relation existed here with regard to the Japanese: if things there were not as they were represented, they *had* to be, "as an ideal, a reproach, a fine example." This appeared to be an irrepressible necessity of the soul amidst the reigning, crushing senselessness, amidst the stupidity of the leaders who did not inspire confidence, amidst the backwardness of the officers and the dull apathy of the soldiers.

Everything which we happened to find out about the Japanese could only provoke shame for ourselves and respect for them. The care which they took of the soldiers was amazing; the equipment was substantial, light, and convenient, and every detail was carefully thought out. Clean underwear was brought to the

soldiers in the positions, and the dirty linen was gathered up and given to Chinese laundresses to be washed. Before an engagement the Japanese washed themselves thoroughly, hence their wounds suffered less from contagion, and healed remarkably well. All the sides of a soldier's life served as a subject of the same careful attention, while with us a soldier was only crude, human material. He was dirty, in underwear unwashed for months, and swarming with lice, out of breath under an equipment weighing two pounds, and he knew only how "to shut up" and "not to answer." Amazing things happened, which it is hard to believe: for instance, our officers paid eighteen kopeks for a pound of sugar in the officers' economic societies, while the soldiers were not admitted to these societies and had to pay as much as forty kopeks for a pound in the Greek and Armenian shops.

The more you have, the more shall be given unto you—that was our fundamental rule. The higher a Russian chief stood, the richer war was making him; travelling expenses, special aids, salary, everything was lavished fabulously upon him. But for the soldiers the war was a cause of complete ruin: their families starved, the aids from the treasury and from the *Zémsvtvos* were ridiculously small, and they were given at very irregular intervals, as the home-folks kept writing.

Our Commander-in-Chief received one hundred and forty-four thousand rubles annually; each one in charge of an army, one hundred thousand rubles or more. The corps commander got from twenty-eight to thirty thousand. Professor Ott, the court *accoucheur*, as the *Nóvosti* wrote, was ordered for a few months to the Far East to inspect the medical institutions, at a salary of twenty thousand rubles per month! We read in amazement in the foreign papers that the Japanese marshals and admirals received a

salary of only six thousand rubles a year, and that the monthly pay of a Japanese officer was about thirty rubles. One Russian corps commander received more than Togo, Nogi, Kuroki, and Nodzu, all taken together. At the same time, the Japanese government paid its soldiers five rubles a month, while our soldiers received the "increased pay" of forty-three kopeks and a half!

Towards the end of January I received a telegram from Kung-chu-ling from a friend of mine, a non-commissioned officer, who had been wounded near Sandepu and was lying in one of the Kung-chu-ling hospitals. I went to see him.

At the Mukden station I went up to the ticket office to get a ticket. It turned out that none could be procured without a note from the commandant of the station.

I went to the commandant.

"It is too late now! You must come before half-past eleven. I cannot give you a note now!"

"But, sir, the train doesn't leave for forty minutes!"

"That makes no difference! You should have come in time!"

"Please tell me, how could I know what you mean by being in time? In the official *Messenger of the Manchurian Armies* the hours of departure of the trains are published, but you say nothing there about having to come an hour before train time. Here I have been shaken up for twelve versts in the biting cold, and I have been hurriedly summoned by a telegram to a friend of mine who is wounded."

"That is none of my business!" the commandant retorted, unperturbed.

"Then tell me, please, to what higher authority I may appeal here."

"I do not know." And the commandant turned away.

We had it up and down for about five minutes, during which time a few dozen notes could have been written. At last the commandant weakened and gave me the note.

I got my ticket. The train consisted of a row of heated freight cars, amidst which stood out a dark passenger car with its stove-pipes. It was filled with officers and military officials. I had some difficulty in finding a seat.

I got into a conversation with my neighbors, and expressed my surprise at the order reigning at the station.

"Why did you get a ticket?" a neighbor of mine said to me in surprise.

"What else could I do?"

"Do you not know that every legal act of ours is surrounded by all kinds of difficulties for the special purpose that men should act illegally?"

"But what would I do without a ticket? The conductor would ask for it!"

"What! Send him to the devil, that's all! And, if he persists, slap his face!"

It turned out that the majority in the car were travelling without tickets. After that time I began to travel without a ticket, too, and to give the proper instruction to inexperienced novices. It was hard and troublesome to get a ticket, for it was necessary to pass through a whole series of incidents: in one room they gave you a certificate, in another they attached a seal, in the third they furnished you the ticket, while the commandants acted haughtily and coarsely. On the other hand, it was amazingly simple and easy to travel without a ticket. From Mukden to Kung-chu-ling is about two hundred versts. We made this distance in two days. The train stopped

for hours at a time at each siding. They said that somewhere to the north there had been an accident with a sanitary-train, that many wounded were killed or wounded anew, and that the road was hurriedly cleared. In the car they were telling stories and holding arguments all the time. There were many who had taken part in the last engagement. They were strong in their denunciations of Kuropátkin, and they laughed at the "geniality" of his constant retreats. One officer was dreadfully surprised at my not knowing that Kuropátkin had long ago lost his mind.

They cursed Kuropátkin. Indeed, his incompetence was too obvious. But I said:

"Very well. But who, in your opinion, should have been appointed in his place?"

As often as I put this question during the war I received the same answer: "Who?" The officer would think a bit and would shrug his shoulders. "That's so. There is no one to put in his place!"

A lieutenant-colonel who had taken part in the last engagement said in irritation:

"Let history determine why we have lost the other battles, but in regard to this engagement I assure you that we have lost it, thanks to the senselessness and stupidity of our chiefs exclusively. Think of it! They brought out a whole corps from the staff as though for His Majesty's inspection! The moment the Japanese saw that, they called for reinforcements!"

He said that during the attacks the reserves systematically never got there in time. He told of the incomprehensible faith of the authorities in the hopelessly bad maps: they attacked San-de-pu according to "Map No. 6," and they sent a glowing telegram to St. Petersburg. Unexpectedly they discovered another village behind the one destroyed, and one which had not been suspected by any one. This had fresh,



untouched fortification, and a rain of shot from the redoubts decimated our regiments, and we retreated. But now this new part of the village is properly entered on "Map No. 8."

"But I ask you, had not all this region been in our hands before Liao-yang? How is it we did not get any precise maps for it?"

"This is what happened with us," another officer told. "Eighteen volunteers from our detachment occupied the village of Bei-tad-zy, a superb observation point, one may almost say, a key to San-de-pu. Near by stood the regiment. The chief of the company of volunteers sent word to the commander to furnish him with two companies. 'I can't do it! The regiment is in the reserve, and I have no right to do anything without order from my superiors.' The Japanese came and drove off the volunteers and occupied the village. It was necessary to despatch three battalions to retake it from them."

"With us in the centre there happened in November a case that was even worse. Our regiment was standing in position. The report came from the observation post that the Japanese were transporting a big gun from the Hou-thai crater to La-ma-tun. Near us stood a battery, only it was not in the charge of our commander. The commander telephoned the chief of the division, the chief of the division telephoned to the chief of the corps, the chief of the corps telephoned to the chief of artillery, the chief of artillery was not at home. Meanwhile the Japanese succeeded in getting their gun to the right position."

"You may bring a million soldiers here, and there will be no victory even then," said the lieutenant-colonel, with a sigh.

On the evening of the next day we were thirty versts from Kung-chu-ling. I did not go to sleep, because I

thought we would arrive there at any moment. We reached Kung-chu-ling more than twenty-four hours later, at two o'clock in the morning.

I stepped out on the platform. All was deserted. I asked where the hospitals were, and I was told that they were several versts from the station. I asked where I could sleep. The janitor told me that in Kung-chu-ling there was an *étape* for officers. How far was it from the station? "Just to the right from the station, about two steps from here." Another said that it was half a verst, and a third that it was a verst and a half. It was a dark, misty night and it was blowing hard.

I walked up and down the platform. I saw something like barracks and so I walked in. It happened to be the surgeons' station for the reception of sick from the sanitary trains. A surgeon's assistant and two soldiers were doing day duty. I asked their permission to stay with them and get warmed up. But this was difficult to do, because the thermometer in the barracks showed twenty-six degrees, and it was blowing in from all sides. One of the soldiers fixed me a bed from two benches, and I put over it a felt cloak and covered myself with my fur jacket. But it was so cold that I only dozed off twice for half an hour during the whole night.

At seven o'clock in the morning I heard a noise and the tramp of feet about me. They were taking sick soldiers from the Kung-chu-ling hospitals into a sanitary train. I walked out on the platform. In the new party of patients which was approaching the station I saw my friend, with an arm amputated. He was being transported with the others to Harbin. I talked with him for about an hour and a half, as long as the sanitary train was standing.

The train left. I went to find out when the train would leave for Mukden.

"At four o'clock in the afternoon. However, it did not leave yesterday."

"Perhaps it will not leave to-day?"

"Perhaps."

Somebody informed me that a military train which was about to leave for the south was standing on the fifth track. I asked permission of the chief of the echelon to travel with the military train. There were also some other outside officers who were going with it.

Towards evening the train stopped on an up grade—the locomotive wasn't powerful enough to pull up the cars. We returned to the siding, had a part of the cars uncoupled, and moved on. At night, while ascending an up grade, four of the rear cars broke loose and ran back. The train started to catch them. The conductor told us that there were constant delays in the movement of the cars and that, in order to make up for them, they travelled faster than they ought to, and made up trains of forty cars instead of thirty. This caused new troubles. The cars were old and worn. Thus, for example, in one of the cars which broke loose the coupler had been pulled out, together with the wood from the beam.

In the morning we moved to another train, which was travelling faster than our echelon. The old, dingy, third-class car cracked and rocked suspiciously, and at times there was a dull noise under the dirty floor and the car bobbed up and down. There were dirty puddles in the closet, and the faucet did not work.

At night, while everybody was asleep, the conductor suddenly awoke us and asked us to leave the car, which was not to proceed any further.

"Why?"

"It is worn out."

"Is something broken? Will it be sent for repairs?"

"No. It is completely worn out. It will be discarded."

We left the car, laughing. "Completely worn out!" At night, in the middle of the journey, it was not some accident that had happened, but simply the car had completely worn out! It may be said that it was worn out to the last hole. But now the causes of the many disasters became quite clear to us.

We waited at the station until six o'clock. The train was being shunted, and a heated freight car was being attached for us. We entered it; it was frightfully cold, and there was no sash in one of the windows. The iron stove was cold. Some of the officers were travelling with their orderlies, and some of these managed to patch up the window and ran out for fuel.

"Make a fire in the stove!"

The soldiers brought some wood and tried to make a fire. But the wood was damp and would not catch. The officers were angry.

"Your Honor, I shall run out and get a dry box for fuel," said the soldier who was supposed to make the fire, running away.

The second bell. The officers did not close the sliding door, so that the soldier might be able to jump into the car. The orderlies laughed.

"Wait till he comes back! He's glad to have a chance to run away!"

So it turned out to be. The train moved, but the soldier did not make his appearance. It was terribly cold, and our toes were getting stiff and numb. The orderlies busied themselves around the stove, wasting one box of matches after another. The wood hissed and puffed, but would not catch fire.

Everybody was angry and scolded. At the stations, except at the very largest ones, it was impossible to get anything to eat. Not even bread could be bought. The officers who were coming under special orders told of the universal discomfort—there was no place to eat, no place to sleep. They were constantly directed

to some *étape* which was usually five versts from the station.

"Do tell me, where are we? In the rear of an army of five hundred thousand men, or on an island of Robinson Crusoe? And this is the Russian Empire?"

In the car it grew colder and colder. Our heads were beginning to ache, and the cold seemed to enter the very marrow of our bones. A bright, fluffy hoar frost could be seen on the walls. Nobody was scolding now. Everybody was surly, sitting on the wooden benches, wrapped in fur jackets. At one of the stops two of the orderlies leaped out of the car, disappeared for about five minutes, and returned with roguishly smiling faces. They cautiously closed the door behind them. One unbuttoned his fur coat and fetched from his bosom an axe which he had stolen somewhere.

"Your Honor, just move a little."

The orderly stuck the axe in a crack and broke a board out of the bench.

"This material is going to be dry," he said, placing the board on the floor and chopping it up.

The wood caught fire and the car became warmer. Amidst universal laughter, a second board and a third flew into the stove. The benches disappeared, but the stove became heated up. We crowded around it, rubbed our stiffened hands, and unbuttoned our fur jackets to let the heat radiate upon our bodies.

"Well, these soldiers are rogues," the officers said in delight.

The orderlies were busy among the dismantled benches, and kept wrenching off and breaking off more boards. The stove was aglow, the frosty walls dried out, and it grew warmer and warmer.

In the beginning of February there were rumors that a general engagement would begin on the twelfth. Con-

centrated preparations were being made, and there was no time for expressing one's sentiments. What was going to happen? It was said that Kuropátkin had told a friend of his that in his opinion the campaign was irretrievably lost. This seemed to be perfectly obvious. But the officers' faces were unmoved. They said that our positions were simply impregnable, and that it was absolutely impossible to surround us; and it was hard to understand whether they were really convinced of it or whether they tried to deceive themselves.

A number of Japanese dare-devils, who had made their way to our rear, tore up a railway bridge near Kung-chu-ling. There were rumors that near Tieh-ling there had appeared masses of excellently-armed Hung-hu-tzüs who were burning with furious hatred towards the Russians because of the desecrated graves and destroyed temples. The rumors of the impending engagement became more frequent. Something monstrously gigantic was moving forward, and it was felt that something that had never yet happened in the world was about to occur.

In the *Messenger of the Manchurian Armies* there appeared a jubilant editorial. It said that we had more troops than the Japanese, that a victory was certain for us, that the Japanese themselves were aware of this, and that the hour of reckoning had come.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MUKDEN ENGAGEMENT

IN the morning the guns began to thunder madly along the whole front. It was a warm, fall-like day, and an invigorating, warm wind was blowing from the south. The thin layer of snow was melting in the sun, and the pigeons were stirring under the eaves of the farm-houses and fixing their nests. The magpies and sparrows were chattering. The guns were thundering and the flying projectiles were whistling. Everybody was filled with the one serious and solemn thought, "It has begun."

At sundown the cannonading died down. All night long infantry units, batteries, and parks moved in columns from west to east. Under the vault of the heavens with its dim stars the noise of wheels over the hard, frozen earth was borne far into the distance. At three o'clock the waning moon arose; it was yellow and covered with a misty veil as though it were painted over. The units were still moving and the air was filled with the constant, even sound of the wheels.

Slowly and threateningly, day after day passed. There were blizzards, and dry, flaky snow was borne in clouds through the air. It grew silent. The frosts increased. The snow fell. The sun warmed the air. In the positions the guns still roared and the salvos from the rifles came in gusts—short, sharp salvos, as though somebody were chopping wood. At night the fires of bursting shells flashed. In the dark heavens

there gleamed faint reflections of gun discharges, and the rays of the projectiles crept up cautiously.

Our hospitals stood beyond the Putlov crater. In the crater something terrible was taking place. From morning until night the Japanese showered upon it projectiles from eleven-inch howitzers. The steel monsters, snorting, flashed by from an unseen distance, and hit the trenches, the entanglements, and the covered pits. Greyish yellow and dingily black clouds of smoke from the explosions rose into the air, spread, and branched out like enormous bushes. They separated from the crater and melted away, soiling the sky, and from below rose new columns of smoke. So it was in daytime. But at night continuous attacks upon the crater took place. Its inclines were covered with Japanese corpses.

There were rumors that the Japanese had decided to take possession of the crater at all costs, and it certainly looked that way, for such a mass of new regiments proceeded every night to the attack. Only much later did we learn what the trouble was. The persistent attacks of the Japanese upon our left wing and centre made Kuropátkin think that it was here that they were preparing their stroke. So Kuropátkin concentrated his main forces here. The Japanese, meanwhile, kept transferring their troops to the opposite wing, where Nogi's flanking army was moving to our rear. The Putlov crater was in the centre. Every night the marching Japanese regiments stormed the crater and in the morning went farther west, while new regiments came up from the east. Thus we received the impression that almost the whole Japanese army was thrown against our centre.

The air was saturated with rumors. Some said that Sha-ho Station was in our hands, that we had taken seventeen guns from the Japanese, that on the left wing Linévich had defeated the Japanese and was driv-



ing them towards Liao-yang. Others said that the Japanese had moved forward on both flanks.

In Sultánov's hospital a new supernumerary Sister, Várvara Féodorovna Kámenev, had worked for the last six weeks. Her husband, an artillery officer from the reserve, served in our corps. She had left a baby at home, and had come here in order to be near her husband. Her soul was like a tautly-drawn string, which vibrated tremulously with hidden longing, expectation, and terror. Her relatives had great connections, and they offered to have her husband transferred to the rear. Wringing her hands in despair, she replied:

"If he accepts this, I shall stop respecting him!"

And now, when all of us, who had long become accustomed to the cannonading, were talking and laughing, scarcely hearing it, Sister Kámenev sat with a pale, distracted face, listening intently, and feebly starting at every discharge of a gun.

The officers' halls of our hospitals were filled to overflowing with officers. One was hoarse, another had a pain in his side, a third complained of "pain in the head, in the shoulder, in the back duct." Until late into the night they played at cards, and arose at about eleven o'clock. There was an orderly officer from the staff of our division lying there, Lieutenant Shéstov. Just before the beginning of the engagement his horse tripped under him, and he hurt his thumb. So the lieutenant had already been lying six days in the hospital. With his arm in a black sling, he visited us, Sultánov's hospital, and the Zémstvo detachment, which had stopped in our village about a month ago.

Pretty Sister Leónova was massaging his hand.

"What! Are you through? Please massage it a little longer!" begged the lieutenant, and, blinking like

a cat, he felt soothed from the touch of the small, soft hands of the girl.

In the evenings the lieutenant tried to meet Leónova in the streets, walked by her side, smiling with the sharp smile of a satyr, and drew her for walks in solitary places. At last, Leónova begged the surgeon to free her from massaging the lieutenant's hand. The cannonading increased from day to day. Timidly and cautiously, as though not trusting itself, a disturbing bit of news began to spread through the army—namely, that the Japanese were surrounding us on the right flank.

"Nonsense!" said the officers, laughing.

But the rumor spread and became more persistent. A dim anxiety kept growing stronger. One evening we were drinking tea in the Zémstvo detachment. Lieutenant Shéstov, with his right arm in a black sling, was also there.

"They are talking ever more persistently of outflanking us," I remarked.

Shéstov looked me over and smiled condescendingly.

"Doctor, how can you believe it! It is impossible!"

Forgetting that he could not use his right hand, the lieutenant took a piece of paper and began to draw upon it the disposition of our troops and of those of the Japanese. From this drawing it became perfectly obvious that it was as impossible for the Japanese to outflank us as to transfer the whole army to the moon. Next evening, about five o'clock, the Japanese guns began to roar directly behind Mukden.

Let the lieutenant alone! Obviously, all the military chiefs were imperturbably convinced of the utter impossibility of being outflanked. In the very beginning of the engagement an officer had been sent foraging in the extreme right flank. Upon returning, he reported to his superiors that he had seen dense columns of the Japanese moving northward. The com-

mander of the corps wrote on the report, "Idiot!" And the chief of the division said, "This gentleman ought to be court-martialled for spreading false rumors!" I was told this by the surgeon, who had himself heard these words of the general. The surgeon asked him:

"Your Excellency, is the outflanking really impossible?"

The general opened his eyes wide in amazement.

"The outflanking? Oh, yes. However, you are not a military man." He turned to the chief of the staff:

"Colonel, please explain to the doctor the whole nonsense of this assumption!"

The guns thundered behind Mukden and madly roared along the whole front. I had never heard any cannonading like it; there were from forty to fifty discharges a minute; the air trembled, howled, and whistled. The cook of the Zémstvo detachment, Ferapónt Bubénchikov, listened in contrition to the howling of the projectiles as they cut through the air, lay down upon the ground, and kept repeating:

"Good-bye, Moscow! You will never see Ferapónt Bubénchikov again!"

It was reported that twenty-five thousand Japanese were approaching Mukden from the west, that a battle was already raging at the imperial tombs near Mukden, and that another twenty-five thousand were making a wide detour in order to reach Kung-chu-ling.

The Zémstvo detachment received a telegram from the chief of the sanitary unit which read that, by the order of the Commander-in-Chief, all the institutions of the Zémstvos and the Red Cross which had no transportation facilities of their own, were immediately to break camp and leave for Mukden, whence they were to go north by rail. But the halls of the Zémstvo detachment, as well as those of our hospitals, were filled with wounded men. The Zémstvo men read the telegram, laughed, and remained where they were.

Before me, on a stool, sat a middle-aged soldier, with the flesh of his hip lacerated. He wore a clumsy grey overcoat, and his face was covered with a shaggy beard. When I addressed him he respectfully straightened himself up and tried to rise.

"How old are you?"

"They say forty, but I do not know."

"Have you been long in the war?"

"Since the Feast of the Intercession. We were driven to Krasnoyársk to be put in military uniform, and we were stationed there. They were calling for volunteers, and so I went."

I glanced at him; he was quite old, and his eyes were those of a meek peasant.

"Aren't you sorry that you went?"

"No. If my leg heals up I should like to go again," he replied, pensively.

He looked shaggy and dismal. What was there in his soul? One could surmise a dim consciousness of a great social work, the consciousness of his personal connection with something important. But, on the whole, it was difficult to understand him.

A short man in a strange uniform was brought to the hall. The wounded bestirred themselves, and their glances were directed towards the one coming in.

"A Jap, a Jap?"

The short man moved slowly, leaning on the shoulder of the assistant and dragging his left leg. With his glistening black eyes he looked surreptitiously and cautiously at everything around him. When he saw my officer's shoulder-straps, he straightened himself up and placed his hand to his cap, with his palm forward, as our boys who play soldier do. His pale face was covered with a layer of dust, his lips were cracked and parched, but his eyes cast a rapid, piercing glance.

A bullet had lodged itself in the Jap's loin. I motioned to him that he should undress himself. The soldiers were silent and watched the Japanese with concentrated, curious hostility. I asked him to what army he belonged.

"Oku?"

The Japanese smiled quickly and obligingly nodded his head. "Oku, Oku."

"Oku?" I looked suspiciously at the Japanese. "Don't you mean Nodzu? Hodya,<sup>1</sup> Nodzu?"

His shifting, roguish eyes glistened, and he shook his head again:

"Nodzu, Nodzu."

The Japanese undressed himself. He took off his ample camel cloak with its goatskin collar, and under it there was a sleeveless fur jacket. The soldiers laughed. The Japanese looked at them and laughed, too. After the jacket there followed a black uniform with its shoulder-straps removed (so that we might not find out to what regiment he belonged), after the uniform came a vest, and after the vest, another vest. The laughter increased and passed into guffaws. The soldiers roared and so did the Japanese; and because he roared so merrily and so good-naturedly with the rest, the hostility disappeared in the soldiers' laughter and the friendly uproar united all the men in the farmhouse.

The soldier took off a jersey and a calico shirt. The bullet wound in the hip had already closed. The Japanese nodded his head interrogatively at me, rubbed his hands, and then began to smooth his round, close-cropped head with its black, bristly hair.

"He wants to wash himself," the surgeon's assistant ventured to remark.

I ordered a basin of warm water and soap to be brought. The Jap's eyes glistened with joy. He

<sup>1</sup> Friend.

began to wash himself. Oh, Lord, how he washed himself! With blissfulness, with inspiration! He washed his head, his neck, his body. He undressed himself and began to wash his legs. The drops of water glistened on his strong, bronzed body, and the body glistened and grew fresh from the cleanliness which took possession of it. All were seized with admiration at the sight of his washing. The hospital surgeon ran to the mess-room and brought some more water.

The Japanese looked gratefully at him, and laughed out merrily. The servant glanced around him, and also laughed. The Japanese began once more to wash with soap his chest, his neck, and his bristly head. The lather ran down in streams, the water spurted, the Japanese snorted and shook himself.

On a bench in the corner lay a soldier who was wounded in the hip and whose wound I had just finished dressing. He kept looking at the Japanese. He watched his clean, strong body as it gleamed under the water. Suddenly he drew a sigh, scratched his head, and sat up with determination.

"Well, I guess I shall wash myself, too."

From the positions the news was brought to Sister Kámenev that her husband, an officer of artillery, was mortally wounded: he had ascended an observation tower, his glasses glittered in the sun, and a well-aimed bullet hit him in the head. Sister Kámenev had her own buggy and horse. She hurried away to the positions.

Behind Mukden the guns roared as before, but we now had good news. It was said that Kuropátkin himself, at the head of the Sixteenth Corps, had attacked the flanking detachment, which he had surrounded and crushed. Three thousand Japanese threw away their guns and surrendered. Our caterer, who

had been to Mukden, had seen crowds of prisoners at the station.

Towards evening an enormous transport of wounded was brought to our village. We took a part of them and the rest went to Sultánov's hospital and the Zémstvo detachment.

The wounded were from the Putilov crater and from its neighborhood. Towards the west of the crater lay two strongly-blindaged trenches, in which two companies were stationed. Above their heads were thick beams, which were covered with earth about two feet deep; and in front were narrow loop-holes, protected by sand-bags. During the last few nights the men in these trenches laid low a mass of Japanese who had advanced to attack the crater. This morning the Japanese had directed their siege-guns against the trenches. One gun's discharge followed another, every shot being directed against the trenches, and the enormous blindage beams were shattered. Half an hour later the two mighty trenches were turned into a mass of earth, splinters, and blood-stained, maimed men.

The wounded were carried into the hospital rooms, and were placed on the straw-covered oven-places. There they lay and sat, singed by powder, with broken heads and crushed extremities. Many were stunned, and they did not answer to questions, but sat immovable, rolling their eyes.

"Why don't they talk?" the Sister asked in surprise.

"Very likely the ear-drum is injured, and they are deaf. Maybe there is a concussion of the brain."

"Just look! One of them is talking!"

A bearded soldier, with a blue, puffed-up face, was leaning with the elbow of his uninjured arm against the pillow and was telling his neighbor in an unusually loud voice, such as deaf people use:

"Says I to him, 'Don't look out without cause!'

But he did! My comrade's head was split in half, the little Tatar was all smashed in bits, but I got away with a contusion."

His neighbor looked strangely at him, but was silent and slowly blinked his eyes.

"Your Honor, is it true that the Japanese have outflanked us again?" another wounded soldier said, turning mysteriously to me.

"That's what they say."

The soldier was silent for a moment, then he asked in a perplexed whisper:

"Your Honor, why have we so little success?"

A soldier of the East-Siberian Rifle Division, with a shattered leg, was carried to the operating-room to have his limb amputated. His waxen yellow face was peppered black from powder burns, and on his singed beard the ends of the hairs had curled up. As he was being put under the anæsthetic, and was just losing consciousness, he wept and cursed. As if from a dark, inaccessible depth, there rose the words which betrayed the secret thoughts of the soldier's woe:

"Russia has disgraced herself! What is the use wasting people for nothing? They beat and maim us, and there is no good in it!"

Again curses broke from his lips, and there resounded a dull sound which resembled weeping.

They placed the wounded in the halls and gave them something to eat and drink. They had not slept for three days, had hardly eaten anything, and had not even had anything to drink—they had had no time for it, and they could not get any water. Now they were gently enfolded by rest, quiet, and the consciousness of safety. In the farmhouse it was warm and cosy from the bright lamps. They drank tea and conversed with animation. In clean linen, their clothes removed, the soldiers lay down to sleep and wrapped themselves in their coverlets with real enjoyment.



Suddenly, at nine o'clock in the evening, there came a telegram from the Corps Surgeon, at the command of the Chief of the Corps, to evacuate all the wounded from the hospital immediately, to pack all the surplus government property, and to move north to the village of Hun-hep.

Everything was bustle and confusion. The carts were hurriedly hitched, the wounded, who had just fallen asleep, were awakened, the hospital linen was taken from them, and they were dressed in their former rags and fur jackets. They sat on their benches in mortal fatigue, swayed to and fro, and, sitting, fell asleep. Just one night, just one night of rest, how it would have strengthened them, how much better it would have been than all the medicines and bandages!

Twelve carts drove up. The horses snorted and neighed, and the lanterns flickered. The officers were playing at cards in their room. Lieutenant Shéstov, with his arm in a black sling, was lying on his bed, reading a translation of Onet's novel, *By Candle Light*. The chief surgeon told the officers not to trouble themselves, and to sleep peacefully through the night—he would have plenty of time to attend to them next morning.

In the yard, by lantern light, the wounded soldiers were brought out and placed in the carts. It was cold, the stars twinkled, and to the south roared the guns and burst noiseless reflections. The broad beam of the projector crept over the sky. Towards the right the enormous distant glow of the morning swayed.

The wounded were to be transported for a distance of five versts to the Fu-shun branch, although many of them were wounded in the abdomen or in the head and many had their limbs crushed. We had a conflict with the chief surgeon because of these wounded,

and yet we did not succeed in delaying their departure until morning.

Assistant Pastukhóv came to me and said to me in agitation:

"Your Honor, the wounded have already received their tickets and I have not yet had time to enter their diagnosis in the book! Please have the tickets taken up!"

"Nonsense! The wounded have already been placed in the wagons, and do you mean that they are to wait half an hour in the cold while you will enter their diagnosis? Not at all!"

"The chief surgeon has so ordered!"

"Start!" I shouted furiously to the drivers.

The transport started. The wounded were wrapped in everything that we could lay our hands on, yet they froze severely on the way. Some begged to travel faster, because it was so very cold; others begged to travel slower, because they were being shaken up so much.

At last we arrived at Hudiad-zy, on the Fu-shun branch. A mass of transports from the neighboring hospitals was already gathered there—everything was bustle and confusion, and it took a long time to distribute the sick in the hospitals. Those who were received there immediately fell into a profound sleep. They had to be awakened again to have the hospital linen put on them.

The surgeons informed me that, according to rumor, the Japanese were pressing us hard on the right flank, and that they were capturing village after village in their attempt to unite with the flanking army. On the left wing, too, our men had retreated for a distance of six versts.

I drove back. It was late in the night; in the distance the guns roared madly, and the reflections of the discharges flashed like sheet lightning. The stars

did not twinkle, for they were surrounded with dim coronas.

At two o'clock there entered our farmhouse two excited Cossacks, with their muskets over their shoulders.

"Your Honor, has any one of you just been riding from Yu-zan-tun?"

"I have just arrived from the north, from Hudiad-zy."

"No, from Yu-zan-tun."

The Cossacks were looking for a Japanese spy, who was dressed as a Russian military surgeon. Near Bia-ta-pu he had asked some infantrymen whither the Twenty-fifth Division had gone, and they had told him. Then it occurred to them that his eyes were slanting and that his Russian pronunciation was bad. They informed the Cossacks and these started after them. The suspected surgeon made some inquiries of the artillerymen near Yu-zan-tun, and then of the baggage men. The baggage men became suspicious and wanted to hold up the surgeon, but he wheeled his horse around and galloped away, while the soldiers had no rifles. After that, the trace of the Japanese was lost. Somebody had seen a military surgeon on his way to our village.

"So it was not you?"

The Cossacks left the farmhouse and galloped away.

"Yes, the Japanese are not sleeping, they are working," Selyukóv said, with a sigh.

Shántser listened pensively to the rumbling of the guns. He shrugged his shoulders nervously and disgustedly.

"Oh Lord! It seems as though the Russian guns were shooting quite differently from the Japanese! The sound from them is dull and slow."

In the morning we met the Zémstvo surgeons.

"You did not leave?" we asked in surprise.

"Why should we?"

"But you were ordered to leave!"

"Much do we care about executing their orders! We came here to work, and not to go joy-riding on the railways!"

It turned out that they had not executed the commands of the previous day, to evacuate the wounded, but had been operating all night. With one soldier, who was wounded in the head, a splinter of the temporal bone had turned sideways and entered the brain. The patient struggled with all his might and broke the stretcher under him. His skull was trepanned, the splinter was removed, and the patient quieted down at once. In all probability he was saved. Had he found his way to our hospital, with the splinter piercing his brain, he would have been carried in a shaky wagon to the Fu-shun branch and the bone would have entered deeper and deeper into the brain.

"We know these Trépovs well!" the Zémstvo man said, smiling. "They are military men, and their chief object is to send telegrams to St. Petersburg, 'All the wounded have been removed.' If half of them die in consequence of it—'That's what war means!' What are we risking? To remove the seriously wounded, to have them shaken up, to transfer them—that is certain death for them. When we have to retreat, we shall consider what is to be done. Why should we fear Trépov? He will scold us, that's all! What of it?"

That very day, on February 19, we received the order not to accept any more wounded, to break up the hospital, to pack up, and to be ready to move at the first word. Evening came, everything was dismantled and packed up, and we had had no supper. We were told that the Japanese continued to press us on the right flank. Kuropátkin had surrounded and

beaten the flanking detachment, but in the rear, in successive detachments, there appeared ever-new flanking columns.

"They are pressing upon us without number, like pigs, like locusts!" the passing Cossacks said, in nervous perplexity and terror. "They storm us without their clothes, in nothing but their gymnasium trunks! We lay thousands of them low, but they press on harder, just like drunken men."

At two o'clock in the night there came a telegram from the staff of the corps, ordering the two hospitals immediately to advance to the village of Hun-he-pu, some seven versts to the northwest. Fifteen minutes later there arrived a new telegram: the Corps Commander permitted us to stay over night where we were, and to advance next morning.

"Obviously it has occurred to him that Novítskaya must have a night's rest!" was our guess.

In the morning we started. The Zémstvo people laughed, as they bade us good-bye.

"Do you remain?" we asked them, in mortification and envy.

"We do. We shall have time to run—that is easy enough."

It was a quiet, sunny morning. Our baggage-train, raising the dust, moved slowly along the road. We were on horseback. Behind us, to the left, in front of us, roared the guns. Amidst the tense outlines of the horsemen who were travelling with the baggage-train there was one new figure. It was that of Lieutenant Shéstov. His hand had completely recovered, and the day before he had been discharged from the hospital. But the lieutenant "did not know where the staff was now," and so he travelled with us.

Hun-he-pu was crowded to overflowing with baggage-trains and artillery parks. All the farmhouses

were filled. We found quarters in a miserable clay barn. We went to have some tea with some friends of ours, who were surgeons in the hospital located at Hun-he-pu.

There we were told that a telegram had been received from the Tsar, congratulating the Army for its victory.

"What victory?"

"They say that the flanking army has been shattered to dust, and that we are passing over to an attack."

"What losses there are in our corps! The X Regiment has lost fifteen hundred men, the Z Regiment is almost completely annihilated, and its commander is killed."

"The devil take it! Shrove-tide is at hand—a fine Shrove-tide!"

"Gentlemen, have you heard, the Japanese have flung into our trenches a note in which they invite the Russians to Mukden on the twenty-fifth of February for Shrove-tide dumplings!"

"Those impudent fellows!"

Sultánov's hospital also arrived at Hun-he-pu. Naturally, there were no farmhouses to be found for him. As always, during the campaign, Sultánov was irritable and furiously angry. With great difficulty he found for himself a dirty, ill-smelling farmhouse at the edge of the village. His first order to the soldiers of the mess was to have an iron plate put into the stove, and to the cook to get a dinner for him. Novítskaya examined the dirty, soup-covered farmhouse, which smelled of garlic and bean-oil, and said, sadly:

"At M—— the ceiling and the walls were covered with rose paper, and there was some matting on the floor!"

Sultánov, yellow with anger, sent the Corps Commander the following telegram:

"I haven't found a single free farmhouse. Where do you order us to locate ourselves?"

I could imagine our Corps Commander, as he was reading the telegrams that came: in such-and-such a regiment fifteen hundred men were killed; such-and-such a regiment was completely annihilated at this point; at that point the Japanese have appeared in our flank; and Dr. Sultánov cannot find any comfortable apartments!

Lieutenant Shéstov did not succeed in finding out where the division staff was, so he located himself in the hospital. While we were drinking tea with the surgeons, he called on them. When he unexpectedly noticed us, he scowled, seated himself quietly in a corner, and began to turn the pages of a much-thumbed volume of the *Nova*.

Our chief surgeon, gloomy and distracted, entered.

"A new telegram has been received—to cross the bridge over the river Hun-ho and to wait there for further orders."

"Do you happen to know how matters stand?"

"Well, the Japanese have broken through the centre. Su-ya-tun is on fire. We have been ordered to keep kerosene in readiness with which to fire all the stores at the first word. The office, the treasury, and the baggage-trains of the second order are being transferred to the north."

Towards evening we received a second telegram to go at once to the village of Pa-lin-pu, to the east of Mukden.

We started just as the sun was setting. The wind was barely stirring, and the horizon was misty, either from smoke or dust. Endless baggage-trains crowded at the narrow, old, and worn pontoon-bridge over the river Hun-ho. We waited for a long time in anxiety for our turn. From the other side there came a Borisoglyéb Company.

"Where do you come from, boys?"

"We took some mortars to Tieh-ling."

At last we crossed the bridge, and we moved more evenly. It grew dark, and it was calm. The stars were out, and it was very cold. We reached the southern gate of Mukden and turned to the right along the city wall. Over the baggage-train a fine, thick dust hung immovably. It penetrated the eyes and the nose, and made it hard to breathe. It became colder and colder, and our feet grew numb in the stirrups.

"Yes, 'a languid breeze the night is filling,'" Selyukóv sighed, shivering with the cold.

We marched and marched. None of those whom we met knew where the village of Pa-lin-pu was. It couldn't be found on our map, either. If a wagon broke down we stopped, and then moved on again. We stopped near a ruined bridge, looked in the darkness for a passage over the ice, and moved on again. We were seized more and more by fatigue, and our heads were in a whirl. In the darkness the greyish road could be discerned; to the left, without a break, stretched the tall city wall. Behind it could be seen the tree-tops and the gables of the bent roofs, calm and mysteriously strange in their peculiar, foreign life.

The wall was left behind, and fields and groves appeared. It was very late, and majestically-shining Jupiter was inclining to the west. No one knew where Pa-lin-pu was, or when we would get there.

"It is well that we are going there for the usual idleness!" Selyukóv philosophized gloomily. "It would be bad if we were needed there."

The half-frozen apothecary, who was much under the influence of liquor, crawled out from his cart. In his fur jacket and cap he tottered along the dusty road, and said, with his blundering tongue:

"It is pleasant to travel in the cold, when you know



that ahead of you there will be tea, supper, and a warm bed; but this way it isn't pleasant!"

We did not find Pa-lin-pu, and we stopped for the night in a village which was crowded with troops. The officers said that our affairs were in a good condition, and that the centre was not at all broken; that Nogi's flanking army had been thrown back with enormous losses; that the post-office, the auditing-office, and the treasury were being transported back to Hun-he-pu.

In the morning it turned out that we were half a verst distant from Pa-lin-pu. We transferred ourselves thither.

Day after day passed slowly. With our tents rolled up, and the dressing material packed in the carts, we stayed idle at Pa-lin-pu. Through the bluish smoke were outlined the walls and towers of Mukden, and not far away rose a tall, beautiful shrine. The villages around the city were still intact, the groves had not yet been cut down. But now the farmhouses were again gradually looted and destroyed, and the century-old trees fell under the Russian axes. Again the Chinese, with polite, reserved faces, tried to complain to the officers about the soldiers' looting, but the officers replied indifferently:

"Pu-tunda (I do not understand)."

"Pu-tunde?" the Chinese asked, good-naturedly, and, smiling, shook their heads.

The guns thundered behind Mukden, and from there, in a broad semicircle to the south, bending behind us to the east, the baggage-trains travelled past us, in an endless line, to the north. Some mounted orderlies rode up to us.

"Your Honor, how are we to get to San-dia-zu?"

"I do not know. Whereabouts is it?"

"I can't tell. We have been commanded to take a report as quickly as possible to San-dia-zu."

The soldier rode on.

The hospital moved past us to the north. Others, like our own, were located, without unpacking, in the neighboring villages, and stood idle. Yet a terrible engagement was going on, and every day furnished thousands of wounded. Upon noticing the hospital flag, carts whose bodies bore the sign of the Red Cross drove up to us.

"Your Honor, have you a hospital here? We have brought some wounded."

"We do not receive them. The hospital is not operating."

"What are we to do? Oh Lord! We have been travelling since morning, and we cannot get rid of the wounded."

"Where are you from?"

"We are from Su-ya-tun."

From Su-ya-tun! That was twenty versts away. From the carts were borne sobs and groans. The transport, shaking up the maimed soldiers, slowly moved on to find a refuge.

A transport of stretchers on mules passed by us. To the cane handles of the stretchers, both in front and behind, a mule was hitched, and, in the stretchers, on their canvas tents, lay the wounded. It was a splendid idea: the mules walked, quickly and evenly feeling the ground with their small hoofs, the stretchers swayed in even motion, like a boat on the calm waters. It was a splendid idea, but while I was watching a couple of mules became frightened, began to struggle, and broke the handle of the stretcher, and threw to the ground a soldier whose knee-joint had been crushed by a bullet. The drivers said that the mules had not been broken, that out of two hundred mules only a dozen pairs walked properly, while the rest were all the time starting, and breaking and overturning the stretchers. Besides, our drivers did not know how

to manage the mules, who were used to the Chinese words of command. The drivers constantly mixed up the commands, and ordered them to go to the right when they meant to turn to the left. To make matters worse, by a curious irony of the linguistic genius, the Chinese "tpru" or "tprue" signifies precisely the opposite of our "tpru," the order to stop. Forgetting themselves, the drivers shouted, "Tpru, you devil, tpru!" and the mules conscientiously started at a gallop.

Some half-frozen soldiers came to our farmhouse to get warmed up and to drink tea.

"How are things going?"

"Bad! All our marvellously fortified positions are now ordered to be abandoned, and we are to retreat beyond Hun-ho!"

"But tell me, how did all this happen? We have more troops than the Japanese."

"More!" a captain of Cossacks replied, pensively. "More. And now our artillery is better."

"Our infantry shoots far better than the Japanese infantry. The Japanese are victorious because they do not spare any cartridges."

"Yes. And there is no need saying anything about the cavalry."

"And yet they beat us."

"Why?"

"Yes, why?"

Baggage-trains kept passing by, and infantry columns passed also. The ring of the cannonading bent more and more sharply around us. A young Chinaman from a neighboring farmhouse recalled with the impudent and roguish manner of a suburban dweller the China-Japanese War, and told us that at that time the Chinese troops ran from the Japanese in precisely the same manner that the Russian troops were running now.

"China soldier, Russ soldier, all le samee. Jap, puff-puff! China soldier run, run! Russ soldier run, run! All le samee!"

He patted us familiarly on the shoulder, he rolled in laughter, and pointed to the retreating columns. Near the millstone an old Chinaman carefully scooped up from the ground bits of kao-liang which had been scattered by our horses in feeding. I accidentally glanced at the old man: he was holding the scoop in his hand, and was peering over the clay fence at the troops that were moving through the dust. The Chinaman's wrinkled face was all contorted with consuming hatred and malicious joy. But he noticed that I was looking at him, and his face immediately became dispassionate and expressive of nothing whatsoever.

And the baggage-trains and the troops kept moving past. No one knew where our corps staff was. Some Trans-Baykál Cossacks rode up to us, some sappers of the postal telegraph division, some orderlies—they all asked where the Staff of the Corps was.

"We do not know. We ourselves are very much interested in the matter."

We were in doubt as to whether to move on or wait for orders. Maybe they had completely forgotten about us, and maybe there was not any need to leave. Our master of arms, who had gone to Mukden, told us upon his return that all the letter-boxes had been removed at the station, and that no telegrams were accepted. On the platform lay stacks of private packages from Russia, which were being freely distributed to those who wanted them: "They will be burned soon, anyway!"

To the south rose dense clouds of smoke from the stores of the Fu-shun branch, which had been fired by us. The cannon roared. The Caspian Regiment passed by. Two drunken, emaciated soldiers, their

eyes red from brandy, dust, and fatigue, tottered by.

"Your Honor, where did the Petr6v Regiment go to?" they asked, with faltering tongues.

"I do not know. Where did you get a drink?"

"We came by the stores across the branch. They give away everything, take all you want, alcohol, cognac, sugar, all kinds of garments."

The baggage-trains of the Nineteenth and Twentieth East-Siberian Regiments passed. The baggage-trains were in charge of an officer. We asked him how matters were.

"There are only our two regiments behind us, and no one else. Behind them are the Japanese. Why is your hospital here?"

"We have received no order to move."

"I should advise you to break camp and get away. See what happened to us at Liao-yang: the hospitals were slow in getting away, and it became necessary for our regiments to cover their retreat, and so we had very considerable losses."

"Tell us, please, is it true that we are giving up Mukden?"

"Mukden!" the officer said, in surprise. "Don't say that! No, no! The Army is merely changing front! That's all!"

A calm evening followed. The sun went down, and the west was dimly red from smoke and dust. The thin crescent of the new moon appeared, and beneath it the evening star twinkled with a greenish light. The black clouds of smoke from the burning buildings were tinged with the evening glow. In a neighboring village, on the bank of the river Hun-ho, stood the East-Siberian Rifle Divisions of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Regiments. The chief surgeon rode up to them to take council as to what to do. The chief of the brigade, General Putsl6v, suggested that one of the surgeon-soldiers should stay with him, and that

he would let us know through this soldier when we should leave.

All night long enormous clouds of smoke swayed to the south over the burning stores. A new glow arose to the west and spread rapidly. In the grove near the neighboring village axes could be heard, chopping in the darkness: the riflemen were preparing an abatis.

Next morning, February 24, guns began to thunder all around us, and we had the impression that we were completely surrounded by an enormous, thundering, firing ring. In the neighboring village the shrapnel burst in clouds, the Shimoses whined, the rifle fire cracked: the Japanese were crossing the river Hun-ho under the fire of our riflemen.

Everybody around us was occupied with an enormous, important, mortally serious matter, but we stood still, without work, without aim, without sense, like unbidden guests who had come inopportunely.

At eleven o'clock the soldier who had been despatched by us came from the neighboring village. He brought us General Putslöv's order to break camp immediately and move to the north, to Hou-lin.

We had everything ready, and our horses were under their collars. Fifteen minutes later we started. A company of soldiers came running up and took up a position behind the clay fences of our yard. From the neighboring village the slowly retreating riflemen appeared. Above them rose round curls of smoke. With a whining sound the shrapnel burst in the air. It looked as though a malicious herd of invisible creatures of the air were driving the riflemen before them.

We proceeded to the north. A mad wind blew from the south, and in the dim air clouds of greyish-yellow dust whirled, so that we could not see ten steps ahead. Dying oxen wallowed on each side of the road, and broken carts, discarded fur jackets and felt boots lay

all about. The straggling soldiers walked lazily on the footpaths, or lay on the Chinese graves. There was an amazing number of drunken men among them.

Three soldiers were walking slowly on the road. They were sober and emaciated.

"What regiment?"

"Irkútsk."

"Where is your regiment?"

"We do not know. We are looking for it."

Their regiment had been stationed near the Erdshou crater. These three had been located in front of the trenches in an ambush. At night the regiment had been removed from the positions and they had been forgotten. Suddenly they discovered that the trenches were empty and that the troops were gone.

More and more baggage-trains crowded on the road, and it became necessary to stop more frequently. Diagonally across from them, over the beds of the fields, a battalion of infantry drew near. A mounted officer shouted in a hoarse and angry voice to an officer whom he met:

"Aleksánder Péetrovich, where is Colonel Pánov?"

"I do not know. I have not seen him for two days."

"The devil choke them all! This is not order, but some kind of a bagnio! Where shall we lead the battalion?"

There was in the very air a sense of helplessness and despair. One could see that no one knew or understood anything.

The baggage-trains stopped completely. Over a cross-road the ordnance of the Trans-Baykál battery was hastening in an endless line to the west. Through the dust could be discerned the black, slender gun-barrels, the heads of the horses, the yellow cap-bands, the bronzed faces of the Buryat horsemen, with their slanting eyes. We stood still. Between the ordnance a dust-covered mounted officer, an orderly, crossed over

to our side. He had a youthful, fatigued, and perplexed face.

"Do you know where the village Yun-shin-pu is?" he asked us, hurriedly.

"We do not."

"Oh, there, friend! Where is Yun-shin-pu?" he shouted to a passing Chinaman.

Without raising his head, the Chinaman continued to walk along the road. The officer rode up to him and madly swung his knout at him. The Chinaman started to say something and to move his arms. The officer galloped to one side. From under the hoofs of his horse the wind carried away gigantic clouds of yellowish dust.

Suddenly the rapidly moving battery began to stop. The Buryat Cossacks checked their horses and pulled them to one side. The ordnance stopped. An officer of artillery rode by, cursing in a loud voice.

"We are again ordered to go back!" he said, turning to us strangers, and madly gesticulating. "Would you believe it? All we have been doing since morning is to flop from one side to another: now we are sent to Mukden, and now we are ordered to turn back!"

In the opposite direction the ordnance again flashed in the dust, and the dusky faces of the Buryats with their flat noses could be seen bobbing about.

The road was cleared and we moved ahead. We went on and on. The guns roared on all sides, and behind us and to the right the frequent rifle discharges cracked.

About two o'clock we arrived in Hou-lin, but we could not even think of stopping here. Everything was rapidly taken up and moved to the north. On a mountain slope, which was covered with enormous cedars and firs, we rested for half an hour, in order to have a meal. From the road clouds of dust scudded through the trees, and the flame from our fires bent



earthward. Above us, over the fir-trees, the white flags with the Red Cross flapped at the spot where the dressing stations of the Novocherkask Regiment and a division lazaretto were located. Blood-stained wounded men stirred, groaned, died. There were no conveyances in which to move them, and they lay in rows. Beyond the mountain the rifle fire resounded feverishly and bullets hummed through the firs. On the top of the mountain one could see the Novocherkask soldiers running back, and falling wounded or dead, and after them the Japanese advancing in extended chains.

To move on! To move on! Like the wandering Jew, without work, not wanted by anybody, we moved on with dozens of carts that were loaded with useless "government property." How could we think of abandoning all that truck and putting into the carts the maimed men upon whom the shrapnel would soon fall! We should have to be responsible for the lost property. The rifle fire came nearer and grew louder. The wounded were agitated, raised themselves on their elbows, and listened in terror.

And we moved on.

It was a wide Chinese road, overgrown on either side with bushes. The wagons moved through the dust-clouds in close array. At the edge of the road, near three farmhouses, a number of men were crowded together, and wagons kept coming and going. Those were the commissary stores. They had not been moved away in time, and, rather than burn them, they were freely distributed to the passing troops. Our chief surgeon and supervisor drove up and took away some oats and preserves.

"Would you like to have a keg of brandy?" a commissary official asked.

Davydov's eyes burned with eagerness, and he wavered. But the supervisor emphatically forbade it, on

the ground that he did not want his detachment to become drunk on the march.

Our baggage-train moved on. The soldiers secretly cursed the supervisor for having refused the brandy.

Near an enormous keg of liquor, with the lid broken in, stood a commissary official and distributed dipperfuls of the liquor to any one who wanted it.

"Take it, boys! As much as you can! I'll have to burn it, anyway!"

The soldiers, with dusty, worn faces, crowded around him. They presented their fur caps to him, and he filled them to the brim with liquor, which the soldiers carried away, holding the caps carefully by the edges. They immediately put their lips to them and drank eagerly, without taking breath. Then they shook out the caps and merrily proceeded on their way.

We fell in with more and more tottering, beastly-drunk soldiers. They lost their rifles, shouted songs, and fell down and rolled in the dust. The bushes were filled with motionless bodies. Three artillerymen, waving their arms, were walking over the beds of the fields with bunches of kao-liang.

Who were these commissary officials? Traitors, who had been bought by the Japanese? Scoundrels who wished to enjoy the complete disgrace of the Russian Army? Oh, no! They were only good-natured Russians, who could not comprehend the idea of personally putting fire to such a precious thing as liquor. All the subsequent days, during the period of the grievous retreat, our Army swarmed with drunken men. It was as though they were celebrating a joyous, universal holiday. It was rumored that in Mukden and in the villages Chinamen who had been bought by Japanese emissaries had been filling our war-worn, retreating soldiers with the devilish Chinese liquor, han-shin. Maybe that was so. But all the drunken soldiers

whom I asked told me that they had received brandy, liquor, or cognac from all kinds of Russian stores which had been ordered to be burned. What was the use for the Japanese to waste money on the Chinamen? They had a more faithful and more disinterested confederate, and one that was more terrible to us, that dark confederate with whom the Commander-in-Chief struggled in vain with his documents, a confederate who constantly destroyed our telegraph and telephone connections, who carried off the most important parts of our railway construction, and systematically disseminated a fierce hatred toward us amidst the peaceful local inhabitants.

We proceeded over sandy, wood-covered hills until darkness fell. The rumbling of the cannon barely reached us now from the dim distance.

Near the road a prosperous Chinese farm, surrounded by a stone-wall, rose on a hill in the forest. We stopped there for the night. All the farmhouses were already crowded with officers and soldiers. We had to locate ourselves in a dark barn with sliding doors.

The faces of our acquaintances, gaunt, greenish-grey from dust, looked strange and unfamiliar. Our shoulders hung loosely, and we did not feel like stirring. There was no water, not only with which to wash, but not even for making tea: the units which had arrived earlier had drained the brook completely. With great difficulty we procured one-fourth of a bucket of some liquid mud, and this we boiled, and, pouring tea leaves into it, drank for tea.

Two officers of our acquaintance came up to us.

"How do matters stand?"

They moved their arms in despair.

"The troops are everywhere on the run, and the Japanese are pressing on all sides. To-day they have occupied Mukden."

"To-day! Excuse me, to-day is the twenty-fourth of February!" I exclaimed.

We looked at each other in surprise; it was a week ago that the Japanese had invited the Russians to Mukden on the twenty-fifth for "Shrove-tide dumplings!" Of course, that was only a coincidence, but a superstitious tremor passed through our souls.

Assistant Supervisor Bruk hastily entered the room, holding a white sheet over his head.

"Gentlemen, to-day's number of the *Messenger of the Manchurian Army*."

We eagerly seized the sheet.

Here it still lies before me—I have preserved it—that historical sheet which left the printing-press during the universal flight of the Russian Army, the number of the twenty-fourth of February, 1905 (Nos. 201, 202).

"To-day the attacks of the Japanese on Niu-sin-tun have been repelled, and our troops have themselves assumed the offensive. At San-tai-dzy five attacks have been repelled. The losses of the enemy are very great, and this evening they have perceptibly fallen back. This morning the last party of Japanese has been driven out of the village Yun-huan-tun. The Commander of the Corps, in the name of the Commander-in-Chief, expresses his thanks to the Army. According to the observations of our volunteer scouts, the Japanese baggage-trains are retreating southward. The troops are in good spirits, and are boiling tea, in expectation of an attack. The Japanese, almost shot to pieces, have retreated. A stubborn engagement has been taking place since on the positions in the neighborhood of Fand-zia-tun. In that region and in the reserves of the war positions, several of our regimental bands are playing. The attitude of the troops is one of calm and merriment."

The next number of the *Messenger* did not ap-

pear; the printing-press was abandoned, and the editors only saved themselves by a hasty flight, but up to the last minute, to the last number, they insisted that everything with us was in a splendid condition, and they did not betray by even a word that our positions had been surrendered to the Japanese, that the stores had been burned, and that Mukden was being abandoned.

Best of all is the ending of the number—a vignette, and, after it, with literal correctness, the following:

“Lo, the mountain summits  
In the darkness sleep;  
Quietly the valleys  
Rest in freshness deep;  
Dustless is the road now,  
Motionless each tree—  
Wait but for a moment,  
Rest will come to thee!

“These verses are given in the translation of our great Russian poet, the lieutenant of the Tengin Infantry Regiment, Mikhafl Yúrevich Lérmontov, who was killed in 1841, while in action—a man of military valor, with a true Russian soul.”

Period. That's all. What is this? What for? What is its meaning?

Everybody roared. Next morning, during the retreat, everybody repeated this doggerel, a pendant to the above, and improvised by a young Cossack standard-bearer:

“Quiet is the road now,  
Merged is all in sleep,  
Only furious Nogi  
Does to Harbin creep.  
Few of us are living,  
All are on the run.  
Japee, stop a moment,  
Stop your noisy fun!”

We froze all night in the cold barn. I hardly closed my eyes, and dozed off but for a few moments. As

soon as day began to break all arose and got ready. The farmyard was filled with carts. To avoid confusion, the senior officer arranged the order of the march for the units at the start. Our baggage-train was the last to move.

In the grey dawn cart after cart drove out upon the road. It was still a long way off for our turn. We drank tea, and went with Shántser to the farmhouse where the officers were sleeping. It was already empty. We sat down on the oven bed. The golden yellow mattings which were spread on it were still warm and it was warm in the farmhouse. I lay down on the matting and put my cap under my head. The thoughts in my head became mixed and slowly merged into a warm, soft mist.

Shántser awoke me. I told him that I would sleep until my time came to leave, and that he had better send for me then. Half an hour later I awoke, refreshed and invigorated. I went out into the yard. Beyond the spreading fir-trees gleamed a red glow, and it was quite light. Over the deserted yards of the farm the old Chinese landlord walked slowly and softly.

"Your Honor, Your Honor!" I heard the breathless and excited voice of my orderly.

I answered, and he came running up to me.

"Go quickly! Everybody is going away! The Japanese cavalry has attacked us from behind!"

We ran back of the farm, where our baggage-train was located for the night. The near and repeated crackling of rifles could be heard. Having become accustomed to it formerly, I paid it no attention. How was this? How did the Japanese manage to get here?

Our wagons rolled out into the road one after the other. Shántser and the chief surgeon, on horseback, stood at the top of the hill and watched. I mounted my horse and galloped up to them. The rising sun

with its slanting rays lit up the yellowish grey plain, over which galloped strange-looking horsemen, with bands on their caps. They flitted across the road over which we had reached the farmhouse last night. On the road could be seen through the dust the Russian carts, and the soldiers with a lost expression on their faces, urging on the horses. Beyond the hill frequent rifle discharges resounded, and cannon boomed.

We turned about and rode behind our baggage-train. The road wound along the foot of the mountain, which was covered with dense forests. Over the trees whitish puffs of smoke arose, and the sound of the bursting shrapnel could be heard. A second, a third puff of smoke, and the shrapnel began to burst more frequently, more evenly over the forest.

The carts drove madly along the road, and the infantrymen ran through the bushes. In the yard of a farmhouse near the road pale foot-soldiers were bustling, hastily putting on their bags, and attaching the pots with trembling hands. From the farmhouse came an officer with his cap perched on the back of his head.

"What is this?" he shouted angrily at the soldiers.

"Your Honor, everybody is leaving!"

"Leaving? Let them leave! We will fight! Attention!"

The carts rushed on. The road was crowded, and a part of the wagons had to turn aside and drive over the fields across the beds. From the forest an artillery park rushed upon our road. The double green caissons had three pairs of horses attached to each of them, and the drivers lashed the horses furiously over their lathered sides. The caissons flew past, thundering with their enormous iron wheels. The artillerymen galloped as though the road ahead of them were free, whereas it was full of carts.

"Stop, you devils! Where are you trying to go?" we shouted angrily at the artillerymen.

But they rushed on, overturning the carts. Above the whirling wagons suddenly was heard a mad cry, which just as suddenly stopped: the shaft of the powder cart, at full speed, hit the head of a soldier who was holding back his cart on a slope, and he rolled under the iron wheels with a split skull. The park rushed on.

Now here, now there, a wagon was overturned. The soldiers cut the harness, mounted the horses, and galloped away. The eyes in the pale faces were enormous, senseless, dull.

And to the right of us, over a broad, steep ravine, a long column of soldiers marched to a counter attack of the bursting shrapnel. The slanting rays of the morning sun glided down the ravine, and the soldiers walked with their caps turned inside out, their rifles in their hands, their faces stern and serious. Behind, from a ditch, the bayonets of the reserves could be seen.

So there were some defenders! Everybody felt relieved. The panic subsided. The carts hurried on, but the senseless expression disappeared from the faces, the eyes began to look human.

The road turned to the right and went through a large Chinese village. The wooded hills, where the discharges were heard, were left behind.

Suddenly a stop. The carts in the rear began to stop, one after the other. What had happened?

We rode ahead. The artillery stood right across the road.

"Can't you drive a little to one side, so as to make a passage for the carts?" the officers of the baggage-train asked.

The lieutenant-colonel of artillery surveyed us haughtily and with indifference.



"I can't. I am waiting for orders."

Everybody stood still for about ten minutes. Ahead of the ordnance the road was free.

"Have you heard? The carts which were travelling behind us have all been captured by the Japanese!"

Again a feeling of nervousness was observable in the baggage-train. The artillerymen stood immovable, and with quiet, laughing eyes looked at the agitated baggage-train. At last the lieutenant-colonel gave an order. The battery drove up a hill and began to place the ordnance. The baggage-train started again.

The guns stood a little while on the hill. Suddenly we saw them again hitched to the limbers, and the battery left the hill and made its way into the very midst of the baggage-train.

"They have done their fighting! They have enough!" the men of the baggage-train said, laughing.

In the distance, over the fields, a dense greyish-yellow streak of dust, disappearing into the sky, moved from the south to the north. That was the Mandarin Road, choked with the retreating troops.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ON THE MANDARIN ROAD

THE baggage-train moved slowly over the broad road in a dense, close line. Wagons, two-wheeled carts, ordnance and powder carts crowded together like blocks of ice during the breaking of the river. They stopped slowly, and then moved slowly on. The pungent, yellowish-grey dust rose in whirls, and hoarse shouts and curses could be heard.

Our baggage-train stood at the edge of the road and was not able to get on it. The carts moved on in uninterrupted succession, and those behind hurried to follow those in front, so as not to give us a chance to come in between.

"Oh, there! Stop your horses!" our supervisor shouted in a threatening, authoritative voice to a soldier of one of the baggage-trains.

The soldier looked up, laughed, and whipped up his horse. The wagon rolled past, and after it came other carts, hurriedly and zealously pressing close to one another. But one of them was not on the look-out and fell back a few feet from the one in front. The driver of our first cart started up, whipped up his horses furiously, and rolled into the road. His whip snapped with a swish over the heads of the horses which were pressing on in the rear. Our wagons, one after the other, rolled rapidly into the road, and the drivers, with evil and triumphant faces, slashed the heads of the horses that were rearing behind, in the attempt to cut off our horses. Everybody was shouting and cursing.

It was a clear, warm, breezy day. On each side extended the greyish-yellow fields with their beds. The carts, ten or twelve deep, slowly moved over the road. Over the foot-paths, at the edge of the road, wandered irregular crowds of soldiers of the line and rode officers, Cossacks, and soldiers of the baggage-train, on their horses with their cut traces. In the thick of the procession our baggage-train was constantly disrupted, and it was now travelling in three separate parts. They were amazingly quickly lost from sight. If you happened to lose a minute in conversation, and then looked around, you could not see the familiar carts. Gigantic wagons, drawn by six horses, passed by with their black pontoons. Chinese two-wheeled carts with the Red Cross flag rattled by. You gallop ahead, you gallop back—nowhere a familiar face, nowhere a familiar cart. You ride along, having abandoned all hope of finding anybody—suddenly by your side you see a cart of your hospital, and you hear a familiar voice.

The torrent of carts, wrapped in dust, slowly moved on, stopped, stood still, again began to move. At narrow turns of the road, when entering a village, or near the bridges, the confusion became intolerable. Ten rows of carts could not get by at once, and they hurried on, and tried to cut each other out, came in conflict, and were in each other's way. The red, savage faces flashed through the dust, and the sound of blows, the swish of whips, and hoarse curses could be heard. As always, the authorities, forever annoyingly present where they are not needed, were absent here. No one in command gave orders, and the carts struggled and blocked the way in hopeless confusion. Other carts pressed on in the rear; the jam was terrible, and the whole torrent came to a stop at the very horizon.

New baggage-trains kept pouring from the cross-

roads into the Mandarin Road. In the rear the cannon thundered in a broad semicircle, and the rifle discharges rattled. A Siberian sharp-shooter, with a blood-stained bandage on his arm, was walking over the kao-liang beds towards the road.

"Are you straight from the battle-field?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, how about the Japs?"

He waved his arms.

"They keep pressing on, an endless number of them!"

A covered canvas cart came by, and in it lay a wounded officer. His face was completely covered with bandages, so that only the opening of his mouth could be seen. The bandages were wet and looked like a blood-red mask, through which the blood was oozing. By his side sat another wounded officer, pale from the loss of blood. Saddened and feeble, he held on his knees his comrade's bloody head. The two-wheeled cart shook and swayed, and the bloody head bobbed impotently, as though lifeless.

Through the dusk, in a mass of moving carts, flashed the familiar face of a woman. It was immeasurably worn, pale, with black rings around the eyes. I recognized Sister Kámenev, the wife of the artillery officer. She was travelling alone in her buggy, without a coachman. She sat sideways, and on the floor of the buggy there lay something large and bulky, covered with an oil-cloth.

I made my way between the carts to Sister Kámenev and greeted her.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes," she answered, with a voice as if from another world.

Her large dark eyes were fixed and stared out from the black circles. "I ordered a coffin in Mukden, you know, and wanted to take him to a train in order to

send him to Russia. The coffin did not come in time, and they would not take him on the train without it. They did not take him. They were abandoning the station."

Suddenly I understood; that large, bulky thing which was lying under the oil-cloth on the floor of the buggy was her husband. The breeze blew from the buggy the oppressive odor of decaying flesh.

"Várvara Féodorovna, what is to be done? Have the body buried here. I'll arrange it for you. You cannot take it along!"

She stared at me in strange surprise.

"No, I will take him along. If I leave him here, I will go crazy, anyway."

"Your Honor! Mr. Doctor!" a soldier cried from the other side of the road, as he noticed through the dust my white band with the Red Cross. He motioned to me and asked me to come to him.

I made my way through the stream of carts. Near the side of the road lay a soldier with dull eyes and a pale, contorted face. By his side stood another soldier with a bandage over his head.

"Mr. Doctor! Do help him! This is simply horrible! The man has a bullet wound in his belly and nobody wants to pick him up! Is he to die here like a dog?"

I dismounted and examined the wounded man. The injured abdomen was covered with a bandage, and the pulse was barely beating.

"See what a lot of carts are going by, and they're all loaded to the top! Just look! A whole wagon filled with felt boots! And is he to be left here? Felt boots are worth more than a human life!"

What was to be done? We stopped the carts and begged them to throw down a part of their load and take up the wounded man. The drivers answered, "We dare not do so!" The officers in charge of the

baggage-trains said, "We have no right to do so!" They agreed to place the wounded man on top of a load. The wounded man held on to the ropes as long as he could, but he lost his strength and rolled off.

Carts passed. Men with guilty faces drove by, trying not to look at the prostrate man. I thought of how they had eagerly inquired whether any one in the rear was defending us, whether there was a screen behind us. There men were struggling, saving us, just like this dying man. Now he was useless and wallowing in the dust near the road, and all tried to pass by as quickly as possible, so that the sad reproach which looked from the dim eyes might not burn them.

I had a few opium powders in my pocket. I gave one to the wounded man and poured some cognac from a flask into his mouth. What else could be done for him?

Softly, like a thief, I mounted my horse and rode on.

An overturned two-wheeled cart, loaded with rifles, was lying in the dust. Bags filled with oats and rice were scattered about. Dying horses, with enormously bloated bellies, were rubbing their long heads over the ground. Disorderly crowds of infantrymen sauntered by with their rifles leisurely swaying on their backs, and Cossacks rushed past on their horses. In the sunlit distance the guns roared like dull claps of thunder.

An officer of dragoons whom I knew drove up to us.

"Well, Captain, how do matters stand there?"

"An absolute defeat, absolute! Our men are running like rabbits! Let a handful of Japanese appear on the hill, and the whole regiment is on the run!"

Sturdy Cossacks passed by us, their caps poised jauntily on their heads; they looked funny in their bravado. One felt a sense of shame as one looked at

the bayonets of the infantrymen, as they gleamed in the dust—they were now so harmless and so pitiful! And the leisurely sauntering, awkward soldiers, too, looked pitiful and harmless.

From their dust-covered faces peered embarrassed, perplexed eyes.

"Your Honor, is it true that five powers are fighting against us?"

I drew aside.

"No, only one!"

"Not at all, sir, five powers. We know it for sure. How could one get so many troops? They press on in countless numbers! Five powers, sure!"

"What five?"

"Japan, China, America, England, then—what do they call it?—what is the name of the country that lies at our left flank?"

"Korea?"

"That's it! Five powers!"

The carts were crowding down the slope towards the bridge. The artillery park was pushing the carts aside, and the wheels of the wagons were rumbling. The mounted artillerymen urged on the horses, and they were prepared to cut right across.

"Countrymen, go more slowly! You will crush us!" shouted a soldier of the baggage-train.

"Ride them down!" yelled an artilleryman, who was sitting on the box of the powder cart.

A lieutenant-colonel of infantry rode up to him.

"You son-of-a-b——! How dare you command here? Stand still! Where are you rushing?"

The artilleryman's eyes glistened impudently and maliciously.

"Where? Just where you are rushing!"

Threatening fires flashed in the eyes of the lieutenant-colonel, but something more threatening and more terrible flashed in the soldier's eyes. I suddenly felt

that that which but two days ago had been difficult even to imagine had now become possible and easy. And the lieutenant-colonel, too, felt it.

"Move on, boys! Don't stop!"

The mounted artillerymen struck the horses and the park cut into the baggage-train. The whips snapped, the powder carts, one after another, drove over the bridge. Pale with anger, the lieutenant-colonel looked on in silence.

On and on, slowly and spasmodically, the endless stream of carts crept. At the edge of the road there sat a weary musician, with an enormous, shining horn over his shoulder. A shaggy white Chinese pony with a wrenched hind leg was tugging at the reins. Arching its back, the pony leaped about pitifully on three legs. In front a soldier was pulling it by the rein, and behind it another was driving it with a stick. The pony reacted little to the strokes, so the soldier hit it over the painful part of the leg. Then the pony, arching its back even more, began to leap about rapidly.

"Why don't you abandon her?" I said to the soldier.

"I should like to, for she has worn me out, but I have been commanded to bring her up."

Again the carts and men were lost from sight, and again they were unexpectedly met with. Everybody I had met in the last six months in Manchuria was here. It was all like an endless Névski Prospekt, with an enormous, strange crowd, in which one every moment discerned some familiar faces.

Two officers of sappers from our corps rode up. The young lieutenant laughed maliciously and rubbed his hands in glee.

"Have you heard? All the baggage of our Corps Commander has fallen into the hands of the Japanese," he informed me. "Oh, how glad I am! The scoundrel! He ran away, and did not let anybody know about



the retreat! We lost all our baggage through him! All that is left is what we have on us!"

"So they did not let you know?" I said, laughingly. "We, too, went off without being informed."

"That's nothing! Just hear what happened yesterday! A Cossack brought the report that the Japanese were at Fu-lin. The commander of the corps laughed: 'Bosh!' and ordered us to take the telegraph to Fu-lin. There the staff of our army was located. We went with our telegraph company. Hellish firing! The commander of the company sent me to the commander of the corps, and I told him that the Japanese were at Fu-lin, and that they were firing at us from there. The commander of the corps listened to my report. 'Are they firing?' And he looked venomously at me. 'Lieutenant, that's what war is for, that they should be shooting. Go and take the telegraph to Fu-lin! We laid the line. We were warmed up with shrapnel. Past us rode a captain with his Cossacks. 'What are you doing here?' said he. 'Get away just as quickly as you can! The Japanese are coming!' I galloped to the staff—there the ant-hill was already broken up. Everybody was mounting a horse. I hurried to the chief of the staff: 'What do you command us to do with the cable? Shall we take it down?' 'I don't know. I don't know. Do as you please! Only I advise you to get away as quickly as possible!' 'Can't you give us any protection?' 'No, no, I can't! Do the best you can! Good-bye!' Then they all galloped away!"

The lieutenant's companion, a corpulent and mustachioed staff captain, was keeping solemn silence. The lieutenant moved with animation in his saddle, and kept laughing.

"We have got the cable, but all of the captain's pontoons are in the hands of the Japanese. The pontoon battalion was ordered to go to cover at Hun-ho

as though it were a body of infantry. They retreated, and there were all the pontoons! 'Why didn't you get away?' 'We had no orders!' So they abandoned the pontoons, and merely took away the horses. I tell you it was an awful confusion! They all lost their heads, upon my word! You only imagine that they have their heads, but in reality they have left them behind."

Drunken men were wallowing at each side of the road. A soldier would be sitting on a mound, his rifle between his knees, his head drooping. If you touched him on his shoulder, he would roll down like a bag. Was he dead? Was he sleeping a deep sleep from fatigue? His pulse was beating, his face was red, and he exhaled an odor of liquor.

Another was tottering along the road, his rifle swinging over his shoulder.

"Countryman, where did you get something to drink?"

"The Cossacks gave me some! May God give them health for it! I saw them as they were riding and they were all drunk. Said I to them, 'Won't you give a cupful to a soldier?' 'A cupful? Take a tumblerful—we don't care! We have just cleaned out a Chinese hanshin distillery!' I drank a tumblerful. It was miserable stuff, but I swallowed it. After I had drunk it warmth passed through my veins, and my hand stretched out by itself for another tumblerful. The main thing, I didn't have to pay for it. He was a fine fellow!"

On one wagon sat a non-commissioned officer with a smiling face, who sold from a large wooden box bottles of cognac, rum, and port wine, at fifty kopeks a bottle. He had seized the box in the stores of the Red Cross, which had been consigned to the flames.

It was warm, and my head was in a whirl from fatigue. The carts entered a large Chinese village. Chinamen stood near the farmhouses blinking from

the bright sunlight and the dust, and looking at the retreating troops with dispassionate, inexpressive eyes.

"Your Honor! Your Honor!"

On a mound a soldier of our detachment was waving his arms at me.

"Please come to this alley. Our men have stopped there."

In a clearing back of the farmhouses, on the bank of a brook, the two hospitals, Sultánov's and ours, were bivouacking. A few institutions of our corps were also stationed there, together with our Corps Commander.

Fires were burning, and the soldiers were heating water for tea, and warming their canned food. We learned from the surgeons of Sultánov's hospital that they, too, had been doing nothing since leaving M., and had been stationed with everything packed to the south of Mukden. But the staff of the corps, to be sure, had not forgotten to inform them of the retreat. Sultánov, yellow in the face, shrunken, surly, was sitting on his camp-stool, and Novítskaya was putting some sugar into his coffee. We had something to eat, and drank tea. Dust stood in clouds above the street. The carts creaked, and curses were heard. Behind the village there was an old, narrow bridge across a brook, and the carts fought for their turn to get across.

A detachment of Cossacks rode by.

"You are resting yourselves here in vain! The Japanese are beyond the hill!" they said, with unconcern.

That was incredible, for we had retreated a considerable distance. None the less, nervous haste made its appearance. The men hurriedly finished the feeding of the horses and tied up the carts.

Our commander found a ford near our clearing, and

he determined the order in which the carts were to cross. Sultánov's hospital was first, although his usually came after ours.

Sultánov's baggage-train crossed the brook and drove over the ploughed fields to the Mandarin Road. Ours started. The slope towards the brook was steep and the rise on the other side was still steeper. The horses stretched their backs and slipped, the whips swished, the soldiers, taking hold of the carts, dragged them up with the horses.

Behind our baggage-train there was already a dense mass of other carts, and an endless line of wagons kept crossing the narrow bridge.

Suddenly, beyond the brook, in a field near a Chinese cemetery, an enormous column of yellowish-grey smoke arose silently in the air, and then a short, dull thud was heard. I looked about me in perplexity. What was that? A new column of smoke arose amidst the trees of the cemetery, the twigs flew into the air, the branches fell down. I had not yet become conscious of what had taken place when the terror which suddenly seized everything about me made matters clear to me.

Beyond the brook the carts, leaping, flew over the beds of the fields, and the soldiers, leaning forward, madly whipped up the horses. Below, near the ford, men, horses, and carts were struggling in wild confusion. Everything around us was furiously rushing somewhere.

A deafening noise was heard near the slope leading to the bridge. From the smoke rushed forward a horse with broken shafts. An artillery park flew by, overturning wagons. A man was flung from the box to the ground. His outstretched arm fell under the wheels. He turned a somersault in the dust, raised himself to his knees, was knocked down by the flying horses, and once more rolled under the wheels.

Another projectile burst, and still another. A breathless voice shouted:

"Míshka, cut the traces!"

The voice penetrated the terrified souls like an authoritative command which must be obeyed without reasoning. The soldiers hurriedly cut the cart traces, leaped on the horses, and galloped away at full speed to the other side. Others did not think of riding, but simply let the horses run away, and started back themselves on foot.

"Scoundrels! Where are you running? Are you running after the rabble of the baggage-train? Go back to your places!" a hoarse, despairing voice cried out amidst the general confusion.

A lieutenant of artillery on horseback was whirling with his drawn sword amidst the ordnance, which had got stuck in the midst of the baggage-train. The gun squad paid no attention, but kept on cutting the traces.

"What are you doing there? What are you doing there?"

The lieutenant swung his sword and struck a soldier on the shoulder. The soldier drew back, silently ducked his head, and ran down the incline. The lean, lank captain of artillery, with pale face and enormous eyes, sat immovable on his horse. He understood that nothing could be done now.

On a hill a Shimose glistened with a thundering noise and bespattered us with clay. The artillerymen hurriedly mounted the horses and galloped away. I rode after them. The lieutenant dropped his sword and covered his face with his hands.

Near the slope of the ford, abandoned carts, men and horses were mingled in wild confusion. The artillery lieutenant dashed by on the high bank. His face was red, his lips mumbled something unintelligible, his eyes glistened with a madman's fire. In senseless

flight he rushed along the brook in the direction of the bursting shrapnel, and his spurs madly tore the flanks of his horse. I rode up on the further bank. Beyond the brook, alone amidst the abandoned ordnance, the lean artillery captain was still sitting immovable on his horse. He had something in his hand. He raised his arm, and near his head there was a little flash,—and the captain fell like a heavy bag to the ground from the back of the startled horse.

The air was filled with shrapnel smoke. Some soldiers ran tottering over the fields, while others galloped on horses with the traces dragging in the dust. All eyes peered senselessly into the distance, or rolled senselessly from side to side. Enormous wagons with black pontoons rushed by. A heavily laden cart with the Red Cross dashed along, and a pale soldier on the box whipped the horses madly up a steep incline, where the cart was bound to be overturned. Indeed, the cart ran up the incline and, as though having prepared itself beforehand, flew into the ravine.

But how did the Japanese get there? Later, much later, we found out: two or three Japanese guns had galloped, with mad daring, through the open space which had formed itself for a distance of several versts, had taken up a position on the hill without any cover, and had opened fire on the ford. And all this mass of armed men started to run and hundreds of thousands of rubles' worth of property was destroyed.

The brook and the bursting shrapnel were already far behind us, but the wagons were still dashing onward. They kept throwing heavy articles from the carts, so as to lighten the load. Something had suddenly happened, and our relations to "property" had strangely changed. Formerly the men had been afraid to throw a couple of worn horse collars from the wagons in order to make room for a wounded man, but

now they readily discarded whole bales of soldiers' cloaks, bags with provender and food, officers' trunks, and baskets. Frequently they threw away things without any need whatsoever. There was something pathetic and hopelessly elemental in all this. It was as if the abandoned property, though unheard by their consciousness, were whispering to their souls, "More or less, it's all the same now—no one will ask about it!"

We were already five versts beyond the brook, and the carts were travelling at their customary gait. A powder cart which had strayed from its park was among them. Suddenly the soldier who was sitting on the box shouted to the mounted artillerymen:

"Stop!"

They stopped. The soldier dismounted leisurely, pulled out a little box from behind, and fetched from it a wooden spoon and an eighth of tobacco.

"We have had enough trouble! It will do! Boys, take off the traces!"

The traces were taken off, the artillerymen mounted the horses, and, abandoning the powder cart, rode on at their ease.

It was as though a superior counted for nothing. Mine became somebody else's, and somebody else's became mine. The moment a cart was overturned the soldiers started to loot it. From all sides there appeared human jackals, who scented prey. I was told later that the marauders purposely caused false alarms in the night, in order to loot the carts during the confusion. During the panic of baggage-trains at Pu-he two Cossacks started to break open the treasure-box of the pontoon park. The sergeant shot one Cossack, wounded the other, and carried off the box.

The rapacious looting, which had been practised on the helpless Chinese, now burst forth with hissing, sulphureous fires, and spread through our own Army.

The eyes burned, and needless things were seized. These were thrown away, and other things were grabbed.

And shame disappeared.

A laughing soldier, dangling his legs, was riding a horse with cut traces. Jauntily perching his cap on his head, he said:

"The Japs drove us from the positions, and I ran and ran! I joined the hospital, and marched with it. They attacked the hospital with shrapnel, and I ran again. I saw a cart standing with its horses. I cut the traces, mounted a horse, and rode off. On the road I picked up a bag filled with hardtack, and some canned goods, and some oats for the horse. And now I'm riding famously."

Broken-down horses and shattered carts were lying about everywhere. The road was covered thickly with abandoned fur jackets, bales, and muskets. Disorderly crowds of ragged soldiers were sauntering about, and it was hard to believe that but lately all these had formed orderly columns of troops.

"Your Honor, what is this?" the soldiers asked. "They are driving us just as we drove the French in the year 1812."

"I think that Russia's lucky star has gone down forever," said a foppish corporal, whose face and voice betrayed that he had been a clerk.

An elderly soldier with a shaggy beard replied gloomily:

"Mother Russia has surpassed her strength! She has reached her limit!"

He walked along, ominously shaking his head, and repeating the incomprehensible words:

"She has surpassed her strength! She has surpassed!"

The endless ribbon of the carts moved on. Again the familiar faces and carts were suddenly lost from



sight and were found once more. Again a tired soldier, with an enormous, shining horn over his shoulder, was sitting near the road. Half-crazed Sister Kámenev passed by in her buggy with her terrible load. Arching her back, the shaggy white pony with the wrenched leg leaped in pain, while the soldier who was behind her was trying to strike her with a switch over the sore spot. There was the pony. She was saved! And so it had to be! Guns and carts were abandoned, behind us stores worth millions were burning, and this useless, maimed pony was being dragged along, and would, of course, be saved! Suddenly I felt in this an enormous, painful, symbolic caricature.

A pale Cossack with a shattered chest had been tossed on top of a heavily loaded two-wheeled cart, and was grasping the tarred ropes with his feeble hands. Two soldiers were carrying on a stretcher an officer who had lost a leg. The soldiers were morose, and kept their eyes on the ground. The officer, his eyes senseless from fear, turned to all the officers and surgeons whom he met with the words:

"For God's sake, gentlemen, they want to abandon me! Don't let them!"

It was rumored that nothing was left of the Second and Third Armies, that the troops had surrendered by whole battalions without firing a shot, and that the Japanese appeared everywhere in countless numbers and madly pressed the retreating men.

"Well, now, of course, there will be an end of the war," said those who were frank.

The same secret, unuttered thought found lodging in the heads of the soldiers. When the panic from the fire on the ford had subsided, a joyous "Hurrah!" resounded from somewhere. It turned out that, under the fire, the sappers had fixed up the broken bridge, and had brought back the abandoned ordnance, for

which the commander was thanking them. Through the crowds of the retreating soldiers there passed a joyously expectant tremor and all asked each other:

"Well, has an armistice been announced?"

Slowly, slowly moved the stream of the carts. The roads were wretched, the slopes steep, the bridges narrow and half destroyed. Everybody thought only of himself. Here is a narrow place in the road. Across it is a deep hollow, deeper on one side than on the other. Every cart sticks in that hollow. The whips swish over the hard-pulling horses, the soldiers strain to the utmost in their attempt to help the cart, and the cart finally gets out of the hollow. The next cart gets stuck in the same place, and again all is bustle, shouting, and swishing of whips. A more heavily loaded cart drops into the hollow and is overturned. If the men took a couple of spades they could fill in the hollow in five minutes, and then the carts could go at a gallop if they pleased. But everybody thought only of himself and of his cart.

But why were the roads so terrible and so impassable? We had been retreating during the whole war. It could have been assumed, even with a small degree of probability, that we would have to retreat again. Here is where the curse was: our people considered this one thing the safest means against retreat,—to announce stubbornly that there would be no retreat, to act stubbornly in such a way that no one could even imagine such a thing as a retreat.

A strange thing! During the whole campaign the Japanese did not have one occasion to retreat, but each time they took the most cautious and careful measures in case there should be a retreat. All we knew about was retreat; and yet each time our retreat was for us something unexpected, and again and again we retreated over "unprepared roads." Beyond Tieh-ling only one railway bridge led across the

river Liao-ho. Our Third Army crossed the river over the cracking, water-covered ice. If the battle had taken place a week later, it would have been impossible to get across over the ice, and the Japanese would have captured our whole army with bare hands.

I was told that at Ta-shi-kiau Kuropátkin, who was inspecting the hospitals, had asked one of the chief surgeons why there was no bath and no bakery in connection with the hospital. The chief surgeon was confused and replied that they did not know whether they would have to stay there long. Kuropátkin informed him firmly and calmly:

"Do you see the river? The Japanese will not go beyond this river. Put up a stone bake-house and a bath-house. Let the soldiers have a good Russian bath."

The Japanese flung us hundreds of versts "beyond this river"; but near Mukden everything proceeded in the old spirit. The stores of military and economic properties were stretched out in a thin line parallel with the front. The persons in authority kept saying that there would be no retreat. A week before the Mukden engagement our hospitals were reprimanded by the authorities for the small supply of fuel, and they were ordered to lay in supplies of from five to six cubic units. A cubic unit was at that time worth about a hundred rubles. The wood was bought, and two weeks later these mountains of fuel were burning before the advancing Japanese. "There will be no retreat! There will be no retreat!" We surrendered Liao-yang in August, and up to that time all the country to the north of Liao-yang had been in our hands; and yet we had not taken the trouble to have a good plan made of it. What was the result? Now, in the engagement near San-de-pu, one of the causes of our failure was the absence of good maps, and the

incorrect conception about the situation of the village of San-de-pu.

The word is power. To enunciate as many and as loud and threatening words as possible, "such as keep up the spirits"—that was the main thing. It was not at all important that facts all the time belied the words cruelly,—don't mind that! All that you had to do was to frown more sternly and to enunciate the threatening word more significantly and more ominously. Kuropátkin, upon his arrival, announced that peace would be made only at Tokio—and a few months later the Russian Army sang the sarcastic doggerel:

"Kuropátkin then was saying  
That to Tokio he'd repair.  
Why, my charger, art thou neighing?  
Why art drooping in despair?"

When Grippenbergh arrived in the Army, he addressed the soldiers with these solemn words: "If any of you retreat, I'll kill you! If I retreat, kill me!" That's what he said—and then he retreated from San-de-pu!

In the beginning of the Mukden Engagement, the hospitals which had been stationed at Su-ya-tun were transferred to the north. In regard to this, I was told that Kaulbars issued an order in which he wrote (I haven't seen the order myself): "The hospitals were transferred because the projectiles of the Japanese siege-guns reached as far as Su-ya-tun; but this does not in the least indicate a retreat. There will be no retreat under any circumstances; there will be only an advance." A week later the whole Army, as though in the grip of a hurricane, did not retreat—it *ran* north.

It was during this very flight, a few hours before the loss of the printing-press, that the official *Messenger of the Manchurian Armies* sang sweetly of dozens of repulsed attacks and of the forthcoming retreat

of the Japanese, and acquainted its readers with the productions of Lérmontov, "the lieutenant of the Tengin Regiment."

They say that during the Anglo-Chinese Opium War the Chinese, in order to frighten the Englishmen and "keep up the spirits" of their own men, had placed enormous, monstrous guns made of clay in conspicuous spots. The Chinese went into battle making grimaces, contorting their bodies, and emitting savage cries. Nonetheless, the English were victorious. Against the clay guns they had smaller ones, but theirs were of iron and shot real balls. Against the grimaces and contortions there were organization, discipline, and careful calculations.

The sun was setting, the sky became clear and calm. There was spring-like fragrance and it was warm. High up in the heavens, indifferent to what was taking place upon earth, the geese were flying northward. But all about us in the dust the weary line proceeded; the accursed parks and batteries dashed forward recklessly, and the disorderly crowds of soldiers sauntered along.

Men were seized by mortal fatigue. One's head was in a whirl and one's body barely kept itself in the saddle. One was thirsty, but all the wells along the road were dipped dry. There was no end to the road. At times it seemed as though in another minute I should fall down from my horse. Then there would be an end! That was perfectly clear. No one will care for you; everybody is thinking only of himself.

And there in the approaching interval between the retreating Russians and the advancing Japanese something was waiting which was more terrible than captivity, more terrible than death. The inhabitants of the country devastated by us, those ominously silent men with enigmatic, dispassionate faces, lay in wait in

that intervening space, like jackals, for those who fell behind. Everybody knew that there would and could be no mercy from them, that we had done everything to fill their souls with a bloody, unslacked hatred for us. I recalled how the Buryats had slaughtered a sheep for us in the Trans-Baykál steppe, and I recalled the thoughts which I then had.

One's soul became rigid in cold terror. Will-power was stretched to the utmost to retain the body in the saddle, and one's hand felt for the revolver in one's hip-pocket, to assure oneself that the redeemer for the occasion was near.

Later, much later, I learned what even now makes my soul tremble in wonderment and the desire to bend my knees in reverence. A medical student had remained in our hospitals at Mukden and fallen into the hands of the Japanese. He was soon released and he told in the *Harbin Messenger* that the Chinese of their own good-will picked up the Russian wounded on the Mandarin Road and carried them to Mukden to the Japanese hospitals. Consider that they did not expect any reward from the Japanese, for the Japanese were miserly in the matter of rewards. Being themselves overwhelmed with their own wounded, they naturally could only look awry at the Chinese with their burdens. And it was in this way that these enigmatic men revenged themselves upon us for their ruined country and their profaned graves and temples.

The sun went down and the crescent of the new moon faintly shone above the glow. I fell in with Shántser and Selyukóv. Shántser was animated and in good-spirits, as usual. Selyukóv sat upon his horse like a living corpse. I learned from them that part of our baggage-train had been abandoned near the ford where we came under the Japanese fire.

We agreed not to part from one another and to

watch each other carefully in the treacherous baggage stream, in which men were swallowed up and lost like so many grains of sand.

It grew darker. The crescent of the moon had disappeared. Behind us and to the left of us could be seen the glow of fires. We were moving over by-paths. The turbidly grey earth showed non-existing ruts under our feet and concealed real hollows. It was impossible to travel away from the road, and equally impossible to travel on the road: it swarmed with jolting carts which would have broken our horses' legs. In daytime the wagons moved slowly; now they were nearly always standing still. They would move a few hundred feet, and then they would stop again. We had long ago lost our baggage-train from sight.

It was cold. At each side of the road bivouacks were placed and fires were burning, and these fires made the darkness still more dense. It was really not permitted to make fires, but no one paid any attention to this.

Officers of a regiment, who had stopped with their battalion for a short rest, made us comfortable near their camp-fire. They treated us to cognac, sardines, and tea. Our gratitude and joy at seeing that there were such good people in the world were unlimited.

To the south slowly swayed an enormous, continuous glow of fire. To the west the stations were burning along the railway tracks. It was as though a series of enormous, quiet torches were extending along the horizon. These torches stretched out far ahead of us. It looked as though all who knew how to save themselves had long gone north, beyond the dark horizon. And we were here in a sort of ring.

An officer of orderlies who had lost his way was sitting near me, stirring his tea in a tin cup, and talking.

"Nobody knows where the regiment is. Whither was I to go? Suddenly I noticed the Staff of our army. Kaulbars was standing and interrogating a Chinese

prisoner. I walked up and stood waiting. Another officer rode up and asked in a low voice where the Seventh Regiment of the Rifle Division was. When Kaulbars heard this he swiftly turned around. "What? What is it?" "Your Excellency, I must know where the Seventh Regiment of the Rifle Division is." Kaulbars looked at him. "The Seventh Regiment?" He turned back and shrugged his shoulders. "I do not know what has become of my whole Army, and he asks me where my Seventh Regiment is!" "

I laid my head on the legs of Selyukóv, who was sleeping soundly, and covered myself with my fur jacket. A calm, warm rest enfolded me. One of the officers was talking in an angry voice to the orderly, interrupting himself now and then.

"We were located in the flank of the Third Army, near the Second. The siege battery was behind us. On the nineteenth we suddenly heard that they had taken it away. Where? Do you know where? To Tieh-ling! We didn't want to believe it. They were saving the things. They were saving the guns in the beginning of the engagement. The thought that they might fall into the hands of the Japanese was terrible. What is this anyway? Do the guns exist for the Army, or the Army for the guns?"

I was just beginning to lose consciousness, but suddenly it came back to me. I recalled that just at the time when we were crossing the river Hun-ho we had met the Borisoglyéb Company, as it was taking its ordnance to Tieh-ling.

"We fought for three days, and we had no artillery. We had nothing but rifles with which to meet the Japanese ordnance. They had carried off not only the siege battery, but also all the guns. In our Army it is considered better to lose a thousand soldiers than to subject one gun to danger. Send a telegram that a whole division has been laid low, and you are hon-



ored! Send a telegram that you have lost one gun, and you are disgraced! All the time they were thinking not of doing harm to the Japanese with the guns, but only of keeping the guns out of the hands of the Japanese. Is it really a disgrace to surrender a gun when it has done everything that it can?"

"Well, the Japanese are not afraid of it," was heard a low bass. "They fly forward with their guns in a most impudent manner, without any protection, and they make it hot for our men."

"That's right! A gun is lost. The devil take her! She has done all the good she can!"

I listened and suddenly recalled an episode from Bonaparte's Italian expedition. He was besieging Mantua. An enormous Austrian army started from the Tyrol to relieve it. Then Bonaparte abandoned his heavy siege guns at Mantua, about two hundred cannon, and dashed to meet the Austrians, whom he completely annihilated. One has to laugh at the very thought—who would have dared to have abandoned two hundred siege guns in our Army? We would have risked our whole Army, but we would have tried to save the guns!

It became comprehensible why our hospitals had been taken so hurriedly to the rear in the very beginning of the engagement. Everywhere was an immeasurable caution, which was always expecting the worst. It was not the caution of a cold, calculating daring, but the caution of cowardice, the fear of a risk, the fear of what they might say *there*.

I was beginning to fall asleep. The same angry voice, which interrupted itself, was cursing the artillery.

"They are an ulcer on the body of the Army! Just like the general staff! Landed proprietors in glasses, Frenchified dandies in tight trousers and lacquered boots. When it was necessary for us to go to a coun-

ter attack, it turned out that no artillery was near! We took the village without any artillery aid. Where were they, the darlings? They were on the run, pushing everybody on the way! They know that their guns are the most precious things in the army!"

"No, gentlemen! Are they our warriors?" asked another voice, which was calm and saddened. "Where are these former lions? If a couple of Japanese peep out from behind the graves, a whole company of them starts on the run."

"They are rabble, not soldiers!" resounded the angry bass. "The whole Army ought to be located in hospitals, and Kuropátkin ought to visit them and distribute warm jerseys among them."

"Doctor, Doctor! Wake up!"

A hand was touching my shoulder gently and cautiously. The battalion was departing. We awoke.

It was still dark and the camp-fires were burning everywhere. Below, on the road, could be seen the black outlines of the swarming carts. Our hungry horses sadly browsed on the ground at last year's grass. Since I had fallen asleep, it had grown colder, and I was terribly sleepy.

Bands of soldiers passed by.

"Have you any idea how far the Japanese are from here?"

"About a verst from here. Beyond that hill."

All about us were steep descents. We mounted our horses, rode down to the road, and made our way between the standing carts. We rode about a verst. The carts were standing still, like a stream congealed in its course. The camp-fires were burning.

Blocking the passage, the heavily-laden wagons could be outlined. Beyond, above them, was the even, unobstructed road. The soldiers were dozing on the carts.

"Why are you stopping? Did anything get broken?"

"No, sir."

"Why do you obstruct the way?"

They were silent for a moment.

"We are feeding the horses. His Honor the Captain has gone to sleep, and has told us not to wake him."

"You good-for-nothing! Why don't you drive to one side? Don't you see that all the carts are standing still on account of you?"

"We are ordered to stay here, for later it will be hard to get back on the road."

Our conversation was overheard by the lieutenant-colonel of the baggage-train, who rode up from behind. Swaying and out of breath from indignation, he went away to awake the captain.

We rode on. By degrees the road became filled with carts once more, and it became increasingly difficult to make our way between them as they moved. We almost lost Selyukóv. It was impossible to proceed by the roadside. All right! We shall wait here for daylight, come what may!

Three sappers were sitting on a mound near a camp-fire and baggage carts were standing nearby. The soldiers crowded up to each other and made a place for us by the fire.

"Your Honor! Is it true what they are telling, that a truce has been declared?" one of them asked me.

"How can one talk truce now, when one can't find anybody? But peace, of course, is near at hand. It is impossible to continue the war,—that is perfectly clear."

"Indeed, it would be time to make an end of it. We have been fighting for a long time." He was silent for a moment. "Tell me, will we have to pay the Japanese?"

"It is very likely that they will ask for an indemnity."

"So the peasants will have to pay more taxes! No, it would be better to continue fighting!"

"What was the Tsar thinking about when he started the war?" another said, sighing.

Behind us a shot was fired in the darkness, a second, and the firing became general. They were shooting not more than a verst away. All were attention.

"Oh, the Japanese are not sleeping!" Shántser said, becoming nervously agitated. "They are driving us without cessation! Apparently they have made up their minds to act differently than before, and they are listening to advice!"

"Who is giving them this advice?" a soldier asked, in wonderment.

"The foreign newspapers have been writing all the time that the chief blunder of the Japanese is that they crush an army, but do not pursue it!"

The soldier scratched his head.

"He's clever as it is! And still they are teaching him how!"

The firing grew stronger and came nearer. Below, along the road, dashed the carts, and shouts and curses were heard. A band of soldiers rushed past the camp-fire.

"Good fellows, what does this firing mean?"

"Why, the Japs are pressing on; they have seized all the carts!"

"Have we any protection?"

"What protection? Our men shoot once, and then start to run!"

Soldiers ran by, and below the carts were flying. The sappers hastily took their wagons back to the road.

"Shall we ride on?" Shántser asked.

Selyukóv was sitting with drooping head, completely exhausted.

"I shan't ride! I'll roll off the horse, anyway!"

I, too, suffered from a dull fatigue which responded to nothing in the world. Well, they will capture me. They will shoot me,—that was a matter of infinite indifference to me. To sleep! To sleep! That was the only important thing!

"I'll lie down to sleep, myself," said I. "What is the use of riding anyway? The carts will crush us to death."

We lay down around the campfire. The firing crackled and rolled on; it did not disturb our souls. New stations to the north were fired all the time—those were simple torches, which burned evenly on the horizon, without any concern to us. The thought of distant dear ones passed through my mind. It merely flashed and disappeared.

I awoke at daybreak. The fire had long ago gone out. Our arms had swelled under the armpits from the tight sleeves of the fur jackets, and the cold penetrated our bones. Shántser and Selyukóv, covered with hoar frost, were sleeping near the embers. The horses stood crestfallen, with drooping heads.

On the road, as before, an endless procession of carts moved slowly to the north. Two bodies of soldiers which had been removed from the road were lying by the roadside, trampled by wheels and horses' hoofs, and covered with dust and blood. Where were the Japanese? They weren't there. It was an absolutely causeless panic which had taken place in the night. Somebody had shouted in his sleep, "The Japs! Fire!" and the panic started. The carts dashed onward in the darkness, crushing people and going over precipices. The soldiers fired into the darkness, killing their own people.

I awakened Selyukóv and Shántser, and we mounted our horses and rode off. The stars were growing dim, and the cold morning glow was spreading. We watered the horses at the river.

It grew lighter and lighter. The sun swam out to the right from behind some craters, and a warm wind passed through the air. Our bodies were rested, and we felt refreshed and invigorated. In the gleaming blue haze ahead of us could be seen a distant city, above which the cupolas of shrines and the bent edges of the roofs rose artistically.

... The distant city in the morning,  
Full of mystery and splendor ...

Along the road an officer rode up to us. It was Lieutenant Shéstov, that orderly of the Staff who, during the engagement, had ridden with us because "he didn't know where the Staff was now." The lieutenant surveyed us ironically and asked us with a supercilious smile:

"Are you running away?"

"We are."

"And I am riding to Mukden."

"To Mukden?"

"Yes, to Mukden," replied the lieutenant, emphasizing his words. It was as though he, in his bravery, knew something which we in our cowardice did not wish to know.

"A happy journey!"

We entered the city. Was this Tieh-ling? No, it was still thirty versts to Tieh-ling. Over the straight, narrow street moved carts and batteries and passed crowds of soldiers. Under the merry morning sun the strange stream slowly descended through the quiet, individual life of the Chinese town. Smoke rose from the chimneys, so naturally, so peacefully. Near the

inn, beneath a silver fish on a red post, Chinese were crowding. Across the street ran children with black queues on the tops of their heads. Through the chinks of the paper windows maidens' eyes glistened curiously.

We passed through the city. Beyond it the country became more hilly. A whole ocean of carts was crowded in front of a bridge. The Cossacks worked their knouts, clearing the way for some kind of cart.

"Don't crowd, devil's children! Wait for your turn!"

"Do you suppose the Chief Commander is going to wait for you? Move aside!"

Leaning down from their saddles, the Cossacks seized the cart horses by the bridles. The knouts swished through the air. The baggage-train of the Third Army staff rushed by. A general of importance drove past in his carriage. . . .

The country became more hilly, and mighty craters arose on each side. It grew cold, and the wind raised clouds of dust. The carts were disputing each other's way as before, and tried to get ahead of each other in the narrow passes. The discipline fell visibly. . . .

In the morning we met a part of our baggage-train, with which were Dr. Grechikhin and Assistant-Supervisor Bruk. We travelled together after that. Nobody knew where the chief surgeon and the supervisor were.

Towards evening there appeared in the distance a high mountain crowned with fortifications. Beyond the mountain lay Tieh-ling. The road branched in two directions. At the fork of the roads an officer on horseback was stationed, and he shouted:

"The Sixth and the Sixteenth Corps to the right! The First and the Tenth to the left!"

For the first time in all this long journey, full of confusion and anarchy, somebody was making ar-

rangements, somebody was thinking of something. We approached the foot of the mountain. There was a long line of deserted gardens, surrounded by low clay fences. The bivouacs stood in close array, and the plain was covered with camp-fires. We also stopped.

All three other hospitals of our corps were already here. Ill and jaundiced, Sultánov lay in a four-horse wagon which had been intended for the Sisters. Novítskaya, with black, parched lips and a dust-covered face, was shouting angrily at the soldiers, like some landed proprietress. The passing soldiers looked in amazement at this unusual chief.

"Is a woman commanding you?" they asked Sultánov's soldiers, with a smile.

Sultánov's soldiers kept stubborn silence, and turned their faces away.

Zinaída Arkádevna walked up to us.

"That will do! That will do!" she said, dropping her arms in attractive fatigue. "We have seen enough of terrors! Good-bye! We are going to Harbin by rail! Do you know, poor Várvara Fédorovna got separated from us and travelled all the way alone in her buggy, with the half-decayed body of her husband lying in a heap at her feet! She came here and wanted to send the body from the station by train, but they would not accept it. Finally a general, a dear man, took pity on her. He ordered the body to be packed in mattings and sent on by freight. She has gone by train with the body."

We found quarters in a mean little clay barn. Our friends, the officers and surgeons, came to see us.

"Our Corps Commander has been ordered to place a division at the positions before Tieh-ling, but they do not know at the staff where the regiments are. They are all lost!"

"Will there be an engagement near Tieh-ling?"

"God knows! Possibly some insignificant rear-guard



action. It is impossible to get the troops together, and there are no military supplies: all the stores were lately beyond the positions—and part of them have been shot to pieces, part of them have been dynamited, so as not to let them fall into the hands of the Japanese.”

“Yes, gentlemen, it’s a bad story!”

A young surgeon, with a wounded arm, was telling as follows:

“Ever since early morning have I been looking for our Corps Staff; but nobody knows where it is. I was told, ‘There is the train of the Commander-in-Chief! Go and ask there!’ I went and asked. ‘Inquire at the operation department, in that car there!’ I went there. On the table lay maps. The Colonel of the General Staff was moving his fingers over one of them and speaking in a low voice to two generals: ‘We have 360 battalions, and the Japanese have only 270. Now, I ask you, how did all this happen?’ I felt uncomfortable, because it looked as though I were eavesdropping. I coughed. ‘What do you want?’ ‘I want to know where the Staff of the Corps is.’ The colonel looked at me humorously. ‘Yes, where is the Staff of the Corps?’ And they burst out laughing and walked away.”

At Tieh-ling Station there was a crowd of people. They were drinking liquor and tea and having their supper. Near me sat a dry official of the commissariat with the shoulder-straps of a State Councillor. He told his neighbor, a lieutenant-colonel of the baggage-train, how they were totally unable to find any dressing material, and how the stores were being destroyed. Leaning confidentially towards his interlocutor, he added in a loud whisper:

“Now each day increases our income by fifteen hundred or two thousand rubles!”

We lay down to sleep in our barn. From the staff came the order to leave next morning at daybreak for

Kai-yuan Station, some thirty-five versts to the north of Tieh-ling. From the station came belated Bruk, who informed us that there was a panic there; they were dismantling the letter-boxes and telegraph apparatus and all were on the run, because the Japanese were approaching Tieh-ling.

## CHAPTER IX

### WANDERING

At daybreak we arose and began to get ready. Everybody was excited and nervous. We felt the approaching storm from the south. Companies and battalions passed by.

"Where do you come from?"

"From the positions."

"How long have you been here?"

"We've just arrived."

"Are the Japanese far from here?"

"About ten versts."

The sun rose and shone through a dim haze. It was warm. Cart after cart started and poured into the common stream of the wagons on the road. Again those who were on the highways did not admit the new ones; again the knouts swished in all directions and curses were heard.

Something was disintegrating more and more. The bars, which it seemed had grown stronger, were disappearing. A fat general left his carriage and shouted angrily at a lieutenant. The lieutenant retorted in kind. The quarrel grew more intense. A crowd of officers stood around. . . .

Near the station masses of drunken soldiers swarmed around the cars. On the ground lay paper boxes, wooden boxes, bales. Those were the cars of the Officers' Economic Society. The soldiers looted them in plain sight of everybody. They broke open the boxes, filled their pockets with sugar, carried off bottles of

cognac and rum and packages of costly tobacco. . . .

Our baggage-train moved slowly through the narrow streets of Tieh-ling. Drunken soldiers looted the Chinese, the Armenian and the Russian shops, and the shopkeepers ran about and shouted in great excitement. The looting was stopped with difficulty in one place, and it burst forth in another. Near the square a dying Chinaman, his head split open by a sabre, was wallowing in the gutter. The carts and batteries moved on in a disorderly stream, obstructing the narrow streets. Crowds of soldiers sauntered by, their rifles dangling over their shoulders. The Chinamen stood near their houses and looked on with their usual dispassionate expression. But, casting upon them a sudden glance, I caught in their eyes the glint of a malicious, triumphant hatred, such as was in the eyes of that old man at Pa-lin-pu. And just as rapidly their eyes became dull under our glances and looked indifferently at us.

We left the city. The broad, frozen river Liao-ho cut across the road. Above the river to the left appeared the charming fretwork railway bridge, which looked as though it were constructed of cobwebs. A few days later it was blown up before the advancing Japanese.

The carts crossed the river over the ice. The ice was already rotten, and it cracked and bent under the weight of the wagons. The water came swirling through the ice-holes and spread in muddy puddles. To the left of us a dirty road led over the ice and came to a sudden stop near a big opening, where it had given way in the morning under the carts.

I was on horseback. The horse, up to its knees in water, stepped cautiously over the cracking ice. It was an uncomfortable thought—what if the battle had taken place just a week later? It would have been a Berézina all over again.

About a hundred steps from the river and on the other side of it there rose a steep, high rampart. Apparently it was a Chinese dam, which protected the fields against the floods of the Liao-ho. The horses and the men struggled almost beyond their strength to drag the carts up that steep incline. And again it was a strange sight: two dozen soldiers might have laid a splendid, even road over this rampart in something like half an hour. But nobody did so; there was no one to take charge of the matter. In the Army there existed a whole department of "military communications." But where the representatives of this department were now, and what they were doing, that only omnipresent God knew! We got across the dam, turned to the left, and proceeded along the "column road" down the railway track.

Over the rails, running past and ahead of us, the trains which were loaded with property that had been saved dashed northward. It was a strange sight: just as a piece of sugar is surrounded by flies, so every car was thickly peppered with fugitive soldiers. Soldiers sat on the roofs of the cars, on the buffers, on the steps, on the brakes, and on the tenders.

The carts moved on in the usual dense stream over the broad "column road." This road had been laid out in time by the Russians. But it had been laid out so much in time that, by the day of retreat, a good half of the bridges had rotted away and fallen to pieces. The carts went past these bridges, driving straight over the beds of frozen brooks. Suppose there had been mud or rain!

Constantly a few carts kept separating from the stream of the wagons, and moved in the direction of the Chinese villages which lay near the road. The soldiers could be seen standing on the hayricks and throwing bundles of kao-liang and chumiz into the carts. Chinamen were busily running all around the soldiers. A

soldier would raise his clenched fist and a Chinaman would fly headlong from a rick to the ground. Meanwhile, enormous stores of provender rose near the station. Huge rows of chumiz and rice straw "bunts," each weighing thirty thousand puds, followed each other in continuous succession. Yellow mountains of cut grain and mattings of grain bins, filled to the top with oats, kao-liang and chumiz, could be seen everywhere. But it was not an easy matter to procure anything from them. An officer of the Rifle Division, trembling with anger and shaking his clenched fists, told me the following:

"I sent to the commissariat for canned goods and oats, but they did not let me have any, because a written request was necessary. I wrote out the request, but the men returned with empty hands, because the request had to be written in ink and not with pencil! I beg of you, where were we to get the ink from? We could thank God that we found even a stub of a pencil! So we went away without anything, and the next day all the stores were consumed by fire!"

Up to the last hour the delivery of every pud of oats or straw was surrounded by insuperable formalities. When anybody pointed out the fact that all the stores would have to be burned anyway, the authorities angrily frowned and replied impatiently:

"What are you talking about! There can be no thought of it!"

Meanwhile, the Japanese guns were roaring and the intermittent rifle fire was crackling in the distance. Then matters suddenly changed. Everybody could take without a request as much as he wanted or could carry away, and kerosene was poured over the stores, which went up in smoke.

"Everywhere, everywhere this mystery, this stupid, useless mystery!" a grey-haired colonel of artillery said in a tired voice. "Up to the last minute they conceal

everything from everybody, and then they send millions up in smoke!"

A general who passed by gave the following command: "The Commander-in-Chief has ordered that the carts should be driven at a gallop and should not stop for the night!" But, in consequence of the bad bridges and the crowding, we had to travel slowly and stop now and then.

We made only fourteen versts a day, and stopped for the night in a Chinese village.

With us there was only a part of the baggage-train which we had saved. The chief surgeon and the supervisor were still absent. The chief surgeon's authority had passed down to the senior orderly, Grechskhin, and the supervisor's authority to his assistant, Bruk. And, because of the absence of those two men, everything about us became clean and comfortable. We informed our detachment that we would apply the severest measures to those who would steal anything from the Chinese. To avoid any such necessity, we bought kao-liang straw from the Chinese for fuel, and we made arrangements with the landlords as to how much we would pay for staying overnight in their farm-houses. The surly Chinese suddenly became obliging and hospitable to us. An old man, with a sparse beard, shaking from old age, entered the room and put on the table two big red candles.

"Captain heap shango!" said the Chinamen, shaking their heads and raising their index fingers in sign of approval.

Our soldiers frowned and were dissatisfied. They were deeply provoked because we paid the Chinese, whereas we could get everything for nothing. A strange soldier entered our yard and began to break down the gate. I drove him off. Our soldiers looked with disapproval at me. They said reservedly:

"It's all right when you are warm! Otherwise you

may slap a soldier's face—he will carry off everything!"

They tried to prove that the Chinese were treated as they deserved:

"Our Tsar ordered them to remove themselves for the distance of twenty-five versts from the railway, so what are they sticking here for?"

They told how the Chinese tortured the captured Russians, and how, upon abandoning their farmhouses, they filled the ovens with powder, so that when the soldiers made a fire there was an explosion and all were killed by the bricks. I retorted:

"Tell me, you! If the Germans and the Turks were to wage war with each other in Russia, would you act differently? We have ruined them all, and have sent them as beggars over the world."

"Yes, Your Honor! That is the way it should always be in military service!"

"No, Your Honor! Say what you please—these Chinamen hate us!"

"Yes, my dear man! But why should they love us? If we treated them justly, did not loot their property, did not beat them, things would be different! But, as it is, why should they love us?"

"No, it's all the same! The Chinese are like any other Catholics—they always hate the Orthodox people and are ready to cut them to pieces!"

It grew dark and we were getting ready to go to sleep. Over the yard, like a shadow, a Chinaman walked silently.

"Friend, what are you doing here? It's time for you to go to bed!"

The Chinaman moved his hand in a sign of negation.

"Captain sleep-sleep. Chinaman walk around. Soldier loot!"

In the morning we proceeded on our way, and in the evening arrived at Kai-yuan. A mass of carts and



military units were gathered there. We stayed for the night in a farmhouse, together with some Ural Cossacks. They scolded the infantry, and told how the foot-soldiers were running in wild crowds down the railway tracks. Kuropátkin had sent the Ural Cossacks to cut off their retreat, and the soldiers began to shoot the Cossacks.

The Ural Cossacks would not even listen to talk of the end of the war.

"How can we end the war? This has never happened before to Russia! It would be a shame to return home, and the women will jeer at us and refuse to obey us!"

Cannon boomed to the south. A new order came—to proceed farther to the north, to Chan-teh-fu. On the way we learned that Tieh-ling had been taken and that the Japanese were continuing their pursuit. During the fording of some kind of brook we fell in with another part of our baggage-train which had escaped destruction. The chief surgeon and the supervisor were here, and the two Sisters who had not been with our party.

The chief surgeon told glibly of his wanderings with the supervisor, and of the privations which they had suffered on the way, and the two Sisters told us some very strange things about them. After the fusillade to which our baggage-train had been subjected, the chief surgeon and the supervisor had disappeared and no one had seen them since. The Sisters had travelled with that part of the baggage-train where the money-box was. There was no officer present, and the train was in command of Corporal Smetánnikov. He managed matters deftly and energetically, and the Sisters received from him more care than they had ever experienced with the chief surgeon and the supervisor. They arrived at Tieh-ling and bivouacked there. Suddenly they learned that the chief surgeon and the supervisor were in Tieh-ling, eating their supper at the railway

station. The detachment was overjoyed. Smetánnikov galloped to the railway station; but the chief surgeon did not return to the baggage-train. All he did was to order Smetánnikov to stand still and not move without his command, even if all were in danger of being captured. The baggage-train stayed there for the night. The cannon roared to the south and the Japanese were advancing. The chief surgeon and the supervisor again disappeared.

Smetánnikov did not know what to do. The soldiers pressed him threateningly with questions.

"Soul-killer! Why should we stay here? You see that everybody is getting away! It's all very nice for the chief surgeon to talk! They will take him into captivity! But they will cut us to pieces before that!"

Just then a mounted Cossack turned up.

"Idiots! What are you standing for? Get away, for the Japs will be here soon!"

Smetánnikov took counsel with the Sisters, and decided to move. Two days later the chief surgeon and the supervisor at last joined them. The Sisters were afraid that Smetánnikov might have to answer for his arbitrary departure, so they said to the chief surgeon:

"It is our fault that the baggage-train left Tiehling, for we told Smetánnikov to leave."

Davýdov answered calmly:

"Of course, that was proper! What did you want to stand for longer?"

Guessing at the truth, and fearing to depend upon their guess, the Sisters looked cautiously about them, and informed us in a whisper:

"Do you know, we have the impression that the chief surgeon was anxious for the strong box to fall into the hands of the Japanese!"

This smacked of such moral turpitude that we did not want to believe it even of Davýdov. Then I re-

called that in the very beginning of the retreat the chief surgeon had said in passing that for safety he had transferred the money from the strong-box to his own pocket. Oh, that carrion crow!

And there were many such carrion crows, impudent, rapacious, and ravenous, that were circling over the retreating, exhausted Army, and over the long-suffering Manchurian country!

Our baggage-train stopped. In front of us the usual obstruction of the carts blocked up the way. The chief surgeon was having a conversation with a neat artillery lieutenant-colonel, who was in charge of a park brigade. He had arrived from Russia but a week before, and he was dreadfully disappointed because, in the opinion of everybody, the war was at an end. He asked Davýdov how long he had been in the war, and how much he had "earned."

"You have a fine pair of horses," said the chief surgeon, who was a great lover of horseflesh.

"They are fine, aren't they?"

"Your own?"

"Yes. I bought up a couple of rejected horses at forty rubles, and I turned them over to the unit and there picked out this pair. They *are* fine."

From a nearby Chinese village artillerymen walked up to the carts, carrying on their shoulders sheaves of chumiz straw. Two excited Chinamen came galloping up. One of them, an interpreter, with a delicate, intelligent face, spoke in pure Russian to the lieutenant-colonel:

"Just look! Your soldiers are carrying off the straw from the Chinese!"

The lieutenant-colonel turned away.

"It is not only my soldiers who are doing it."

He touched his horse with his spurs. The interpreter bit his lip and looked after him.

"The patience of the Chinese will soon give way,

and they will begin to shoot at you!" he shouted angrily, and slowly drove away.

The matter was both painful and ridiculous. Where was the limit at which the Chinese patience would at last give way?

We stopped at Chan-teh-fu for two days. We heard the news that Kuropátkin had been deposed and recalled to St. Petersburg. In the evening our hospitals received an order from the Chief of the Sanitary Unit of the Third Army, General Chetýrkin. Our hospital was commanded to go north, to stop at siding No. 86, to pitch a tent there, and to stay there until March 8; and then, at twelve o'clock noon (how precise!), without awaiting any further order, to go to Kung-chu-ling.

But during our retreat we had lost half of our train, and were unable to function as a hospital, which fact, of course, we had reported to the general at the proper time. However, the command had to be carried out.

We started. Again endless lines of carts and retreating units extended northward on both sides of the railway tracks. We were told that the Japanese had already taken Kai-yuan, and that the siding beyond Kai-yuan had already been fired. Again trains rushed past us, and again all the cars were thickly peppered with fugitive soldiers. We were informed that at Kung-chu-ling they had stopped more than forty thousand fugitives, that fifty soldiers had been turned over to be court-martialled, and that men were being shot without mercy.

About four o'clock in the morning we arrived at the siding. A complete wilderness—not a single hamlet, not a brook, no trees nearby; only one small well in which there was enough water for ten horses, and no more. The chief surgeon wired Chetýrkin that there was neither wood nor provender nor water at

the siding, and that the hospital could not function there, and he asked his permission to take up a position somewhere else.

We stayed there for the night. The telegram was not answered, but now, with the cement all worked out, things were done easily and simply. We broke camp without permission, and proceeded to Si-ping-kai.

Si-ping-kai swarmed with troops and institutions. At the station stood the luxurious train of the new Commander-in-Chief, Linévich. The plate windows of the train glistened, and in the car containing the kitchen cooks were busily at work. The officers of the staff walked about on the platform, neat, well-dressed and well-fed; and they furnished a strange sight among the emaciated, dust-covered officers and soldiers that kept marching by. Malice and hostility were engendered.

Ominous, disturbing rumors kept coming up and spreading abroad: the Japanese were already within twenty versts of Si-ping-kai; Nogi, with an army of sixty thousand men, was advancing from the rear to Kirin; the Japanese had captured part of Kuropátkin's baggage-train, and the plans of the defence of Vladivostók had fallen into their hands. The common impression was that it was quite unthinkable to continue the war, and that the troops were utterly demoralized. On everybody's lips was the one word—"Sedan." At the same time we were informed that they had decided at St. Petersburg to continue the war at all costs, and that, "to raise the spirit of the Army," Prince Nikoláy Nikoláevich had been chosen as Commander-in-Chief. A painful sensation was created at the thought—How can men be so utterly blind?

Everything about us gave the impression of unlimited, universal confusion and insuperable disorder. I met a friend of mine who was an officer at the Staff of our army. He told me that it was rumored that

a Japanese column was marching parallel with our troops, about fifteen versts from the railway.

"But this can be definitely determined by scouts," I replied, in perplexity.

"You can't imagine what is now taking place at the Staff! It is a fairy-tale that an uninitiated man would not believe! One would think that never has time been hotter than now, and that the Staffs must be working day and night! Yet they are sitting with folded arms! I have discovered some work for myself, in order that I may not see what is taking place all about me! They have all but one absorbing interest, and that is, rewards! They talk of nothing else but rewards!"

Many anecdotes were told about the Japanese being so well informed. A captive Japanese officer was brought to our general. Just then the general was commanding his orderly:

"Ride at once to the commander of the N. Regiment and tell him so-and-so."

"Your Excellency, where is the regiment stationed?"

"Where? What do you call that village?"

The general tried hard to think of the name, and helplessly snapped his fingers. The Japanese obligingly came to his aid:

"Your Excellency, the N. Regiment is stationed at the village of Z."

Another anecdote:

A Cossack brought to the Staff a man in the uniform of a Russian officer, and reported that he had caught a disguised Japanese spy.

"But this is a Russian officer!"

"No, sir! A Japanese!"

"He is a Russian! You are talking nonsense!"

"A Japanese! I am sure! In the first place, he talks excellent Russian; in the second, he knows the disposition of our armies admirably."

We stopped at Si-ping-kai for several days, and on March 8, at noon, executing the command of General Chetýrkin, we started for Kung-chu-ling. Now the roads were broad and empty; the majority of the carts had left for the north. There were rumors that bands of Hung-hu-tzüs were roaming about and attacking the units that were moving separately. In the evening, when we were walking in the darkness over the mountains, the dry, last-year's grass began to burn mysteriously on the slopes of the craters and long ribbons of fire crept past us, while all around us was quiet and calm. It was said that the Chinese were in this way indicating to the Japanese the roads over which the Russians were retreating. We were disquieted and felt nervous.

Here and there, in the villages along the road, guards consisting of one or two companies were stationed for protection. One morning we passed through such a village and then descended into the valley. Over the slope of a ravine five or six black Chinese pigs dashed at breakneck speed, and after them, stretching out far over the plain, ran soldiers with rifles in their hands. Now and then a soldier squatted, did something which we could not make out, and ran on. Our detachment followed what was taking place with eager and sympathetic interest.

"Bully! He got her! She has turned a somerset!"

"No, he has missed her! He has only wounded her! She is off again!"

"Off! Not a bit of it! He is finishing her with the bayonet!"

The soldiers were shooting at the pigs. The wind was blowing away from us, and we could not hear the shots. All we could see was the feeble flashes from the barrels of the rifles.

Four soldiers were running to cut off the flight of the pigs. One of them squatted and fired—he missed

her. The bullet, whining, passed over our heads. Like little children, the soldiers forgot everything and were all absorbed in the hunt. The fires from the rifles flashed, the bullets whistled.

Our eyes could not believe it: this was taking place within two steps of the Japanese at the time when a false alarm of battle might lead to endless calamities!

From behind a hill there appeared three cautious heads of Cossacks with their pikes. The soldiers were triumphantly dragging the pigs to the village.

Relieved by the absence of an expected danger, the Cossacks galloped at a lively pace up to the soldiers and began to scold them. The excited chief surgeon shouted:

"Oh, there, Cossacks! Arrest them! Bring them here!"

The Cossacks brought up two frightened soldiers, with faces as white as chalk. One was a young, beardless fellow; the other had a black beard, and was about thirty years old. The Cossacks told as follows:

"Our hundred was proceeding along the road, when suddenly we heard some firing, and bullets whizzed over our heads. The commander sent us out on scouting duty, and it was these rascals!"

"Unscrew the bayonets!" the chief surgeon commanded. "Let me see if their rifles are loaded! Oh, you sons-of-b——! Have them court-martialled at once! Follow after us!"

The Cossacks galloped away to join their hundred. We moved on, accompanied by the prisoners. They walked along, slowly rolling their wide-open eyes, and pale from the sudden danger that had descended upon them. Our soldiers spoke to them sympathetically.

On the bank of a river, at the bottom of a slope, lay with drooping head an ox which had strayed from the herd. The chief surgeon's eyes were burning. He stopped the baggage-train, walked down to the river,



and commanded the soldiers to slaughter the ox and to carry off the meat. This was a hundred rubles of profit for him! The soldiers grumbled and said:

"Maybe he is diseased. We won't eat the meat, anyway!"

The chief surgeon pretended that he did not hear the grumbling, stuck his finger into the bloody lights, and said:

"Oh, he's all right! It would be a shame to throw away so much meat on the road!"

The prisoners were not placed under guard. They made use of the distraction and disappeared.

We arrived at Kung-chu-ling. This, too, was all filled with troops. Assistant-supervisor Bruk had been stationed there for five days with a part of the baggage-train. The chief surgeon had sent him there with the superfluous property from the siding to which we had been ordered by General Chetýrkin. Bruk said that he had upon arriving turned to the local commissariat with the request for oats. The horses had been eating nothing but straw for a week. At the commissariat he was asked:

"Where does your hospital come from?"

"From Mukden."

"Oh, from Mukden! No oats for you: we give nothing to fugitives!"

And they didn't give him any. Here there was a display of that amazing "patriotism" that in this war distinguished the Rear, which hadn't smelt powder once. During the whole time up to the declaration of peace this Rear burned with military courage from its safe distance, heaped contempt on the Army that was draining its blood, and called men to "Russia's honor and glory."

It must be said that there were heroism, daring, and self-sacrifice there behind us; but here one was struck by the human cowardice, shamelessness, and moral filth

—all that dark ooze which, in the beginning, the gigantic wave of the retreating Army cast forth.

At the buffet I met some kind of officer from one of our regiments. The commander of his company had been killed in the very beginning of the battle, and the command had passed over to him.

"How do you happen to be here?"

He answered cheerfully:

"I just got sick. Rheumatism in my legs. I applied to the hospital, but they wouldn't take me."

"How long have you been here?"

"About ten days."

"Who is in charge of your company?"

"We have a supernumerary lieutenant there."

"And what are you doing here?"

"I am waiting for our regiment."

He was waiting for it! And he himself, jolly, care-free, vivacious, did not even understand the disgracefulness of his action!

Fugitive soldiers continued to make their escape on the trains which were travelling north. Special officers had been despatched to catch them. Such an officer would be sitting in a heated freight-car where it was dark, while the moon shone brightly outside. There would be outlined the figure of a soldier with his rifle, trying to climb into the car.

"Oh, Long-beard! Where are you going?"

"Don't mind, countryman! I am alone!"

"Where are you going to?"

"I'm looking for my regiment."

"So you are going to Harbin to look for your regiment, eh?"

And the soldier would be arrested.

A surgeon in charge of a disinfection train, a friend of mine, told me the following: during the retreat from Mukden an empty heated freight-car was filled with wounded officers. The train arrived at Kuan-cheng-

tzü. Suddenly many of the wounded discarded their bandages, climbed out of the car, and calmly scattered in all directions. The bandages had been placed on uninjured limbs. A lieutenant-colonel with a heavily bandaged eye informed the doctor that he had been wounded by a projectile in the cornea. The doctor took off the bandage, expecting to see a horrible wound; but the eye was perfectly well.

"Where is your injury?"

"I have no wound, you know. What do you call it? A projectile flew close by! A contusion! I have received a contusion in the cornea!"

The Chief Inspector of Hospitals, Ezérski, of whom I have already told many a story, could now develop his activity in full. The ex-chief of police now found his milieu. He galloped from station to station, and from train to train, and arranged formal raids and domiciliary searches. They told that he had found in a train two officers who had concealed themselves from him under an empty kettle on an open car. But General Ezérski did not confine himself to the arrest of fugitives in freight and passenger cars. He did the same in the sanitary trains. He verified and changed the diagnoses of the surgeons, and put out the sick, whom he declared to be well. Apparently his activity ultimately attracted attention; he was transferred somewhere to the Rear, I think to Vladivostók.

The advance of the Japanese came to a stop. Slowly everything began to assume orderly shape. The connections between the units were re-established.

There were rumors that our scouting-parties were unable to find Japanese anywhere. They had somehow disappeared without a trace. It was said that they were marching by detours on each side of the railway as far as the station Vand-zia-tun, and from the east, while another was approaching Bodune from the west.

Late in the evening of March 14, our two movable hospitals and six others received a new order from General Chetýrkin, to leave next day at noon and proceed to the village of Li-dia-tun. To the order were attached descriptions of the country with indications of the chief villages along the road. It was necessary to proceed thirty versts to the north along the railway as far as the station Fand-zia-tun, and from there twenty versts to the west.

All our military units were stationed here at Kung-chu-ling, so what was the use of going there? But it wasn't our business to reason. We proceeded.

The weather changed. It was misty, cold, and windy. In the evening it began to drizzle, and at night-fall a wet snow fell. We stopped for the night near a siding, in a small fortified village of frontiersmen, and in the morning we moved on. According to the plan with which we had been furnished, we were to turn to the left, and the Fand-zia-tun Station could be seen in the distance. We asked some Chinese who passed by where the village of Li-dia-tun was. They all pointed unanimously to the east of the railway, whereas our plan ordered us to go to the west. Then we began to inquire about the road villages which were given in our plan, Dava and Hunshimioz. The Chinamen pointed them out to the west.

The chief surgeon hired a Chinese guide, but, on account of his haggling spirit, he did not make any arrangement about the price, and simply said, "I pay you money." The Chinaman guided us. The snow kept falling, and it was cold and wet. We moved ahead slowly. Towards evening we stopped in a large village about seven versts from the railway. There was not even a sign of the presence of Russian troops around us—not a soldier, not a Cossack. Nothing but Chinese. Other hospitals which had been despatched

together with ours passed by. Everybody was in perplexity, everybody cursed Chetýrkin.

"To what place is he sending us? Somewhere into the depths of China! And all by ourselves! What are we going to do there?"

"I suppose he put his finger on the map, hit or miss: take my hospitals there and there! Then the superiors will see that he is not sitting without work, that he is busy and doing something!"

We stayed for the night in a large, well-to-do farmhouse of an old Chinaman with a serious, intelligent face. The chief surgeon patted the landlord soothingly on the shoulder, as he was wont to do at all stops, and told him not to worry, because he would be paid for everything.

The snow still fell, fine, slow snow, without any wind. By morning about five inches had fallen, and everything had a wintry appearance. The chief surgeon decided to stay here for the day, in order to give the horses a chance to get rested. It was lonesome and dreary. The soldiers carried away from the barns anything that fell into their hands. The old landlord, with a long pipe in his mouth, walked quietly up and down the yard, without protesting, merely examining his barns after the soldiers had left. One felt ashamed, looking at his serious, pensive face, with the imprint of a peculiar, aristocratic elegance.

In the morning we got ready to leave. The chief surgeon was surrounded by the Chinamen from whom he had taken provender and wood, and in whose farmhouses the rank and file had slept. The chief surgeon, as though busy with some matters, told them all in an impatient voice:

"Just wait! Later!"

The baggage-train was ready, and a mount was brought to the chief surgeon.

"You'll get it all right," the chief surgeon said ha-

tily, handing out money to the Chinese that surrounded him. To one he gave half a ruble, to another a ruble. To our landlord he gave five rubles.

The Chinamen became excited, and through our interpreter and guide began to figure out how much wood and kao-liang straw our soldiers had used up, and how much chumiz they had taken for the horses. Our landlord did not say a word. He only held the five ruble note in his hand and sadly looked at Davýdov as though ashamed for him.

"That's all you'll get, you scoundrel!" the chief surgeon said, angrily.

"Of course they are thieves! They do nothing but lie!" the soldiers sustained, looking with hostility at the Chinamen.

"They ought to be satisfied with anything I have given them! And they think it's too little!" Davýdov said, in provocation.

We indignantly protested:

"Why, then, don't you agree about the price in advance? If kao-liang and chumiz are wanted, buy the stuff and pay for it! You simply take without purchasing, and do not even control the amount the soldiers may take!"

"These rascals would gladly flay you alive!"

"I don't know about that! When we travelled without you we always got along excellently with the Chinese, and there never were any misunderstandings?"

"Enough! Away!" Davýdov shouted at the Chinamen, and mounted his horse. "We are off! Friend, lead us on!" he said, turning to the guide.

The guide looked at him with indignant eyes.

"Me not want!" he said.

The chief surgeon felt abashed.

"I'll give you two rubles!" he said, raising two fingers.

The guide shook his head and walked away.

We proceeded without a guide. In the next village Davýdov hired another Chinaman to take us to Li-dia-tun.

The new guide was a stalwart fellow with bold, smiling eyes and with his thick queue wound about his head. He walked ahead of the train, leaning on a long staff, stepping over the snow with his Chinese boots, with their characteristic straps in the back. It was cold, and the snow glistened in the sun. The roads were bad and little travelled over. Away behind us was the railway, from which the whistling of the locomotives and the rumbling of the trains could barely be heard. Then even these sounds disappeared in the snowy quiet.

We walked and walked. Nowhere was there a Russian face. There were hardly any villages, only separate hamlets of from three to four farmhouses, close to each other. The Chinese at the gates watched us curiously, and, as usual, with silent, dispassionate glances.

The sun was shining, the snow was sparkling. The soldiers instinctively pressed closer to the carts. The guide, in his three-cornered fur cap, marched silently ahead of the baggage-train, leaning on his long staff, and laughing at something with his bold, bulging eyes.

"Your Honor, what is this—is a Chinese Susánin<sup>1</sup> guiding us?" the master-at-arms asked me.

It looked very much like it.

At last we reached the village Hun-shimi-oz. Here we learned definitely that no such village as Li-dia-tun existed in the country around, and that there were only villages Li-diu and Li-dia-fan. In the distance we could see the camps of the hospitals that had arrived before us. They had taken up their positions in the large village Li-dia-fan. All the farmhouses were occupied,

<sup>1</sup> A Russian guide who led the attacking Polish army into an ambush, and thus saved Emperor Michael.

and not one was left for us. Here again everybody had the sensation of blundering and neglect. One of the hospitals had remained the night before in a village where, according to the statement of the Chinese, a large division of well-armed Hung-hu-tzüs had stayed the previous night.

Our hospital stopped in a small hamlet about two versts from Li-dia-fan.

The Chinese hurriedly carried off on their shoulder yokes baskets and bags filled with their property. Our landlords conversed with us amiably, and smiled good-naturedly, but at the same time talked with concern and haste among themselves, watching the stacks of kao-liang as they were being carried off by the soldiers. The supervisor always had permitted the looting with indifference and unconcern. But this time he suddenly made an attack upon the soldiers and angrily proclaimed that if any one would take as much as a stick from the Chinese without his permission he would immediately have him court-martialled.

Now that danger was in the air the supervisor changed all of a sudden. He became modest and pensive, suddenly began to think of his rights, and started to buy provender and provisions without reference to the chief surgeon, paying for everything in cash. The chief surgeon frowned and quarrelled with him, but the supervisor was now firm and decided. The Chinese found in him a warm protector. He sternly watched his detachment and allowed no looting. It was only necessary for a little danger to loom up, for a little chance of resistance—and suddenly it became very easy to arrange matters with the Chinese, and not worst them!

We stayed there a day, and yet another day. A new order came from Chetýrkin, addressed to the chief surgeon of one of the hospitals. This was that all



the hospitals were to pitch camp, that such-and-such a hospital was to receive the severely wounded, such-and-such the contagious patients, and so forth. Our hospital was ordered to care for the "slightly indisposed and the lightly wounded until their recovery." Everybody roared. Of course, not a single hospital pitched camp, because there were no patients to receive.

The snow melted by degrees, and a cold, dirty-white slush ensued. The nights were pitch dark. A patrol walked around the hamlet, and sentinels stood in the yard near the gates. But it was impossible to see two paces ahead, and the Hung-hu-tzüs could easily get up to the very hamlet without a shot being fired. Now the Hung-hu-tzüs were armed with Japanese rifles, had been regularly drilled, and made attacks in accordance with all the tactical rules.

Late one evening, after we had retired, the regular clatter of a galloping horse could be heard along the road, and later in the yard of our farmhouse. A pale soldier, a stranger to us, entered and handed the supervisor a note. It was from the supervisor of the adjoining hospital.

"According to rumors which have reached us, a large party of Hung-hu-tzüs is preparing to attack our hospitals in the night, of which fact I herewith inform you."

Everybody was suddenly filled with anxiety. The supervisor grew pale, and sent the servant for the sergeant-major.

"I believe you have a company for defence?" he asked the soldier who had brought the note.

"Yes, sir."

The supervisor sent by him a note in which he asked, in view of our lonely situation, to have a squad from the company of defence sent to him for protection.

We had in all eighty-five bayonets, counting the grooms, orderlies, and cooks. Forty soldiers surrounded our hamlet on all sides, and the others were

commanded to sleep in their clothes with loaded rifles by their sides. In the yard it was as dark as in a cellar. The surgeons' assistants and we surgeons examined our revolvers.

"There is no sense being afraid of the Chinamen! They are not Japs!" the soldiers said, contemptuously. "I'll manage two dozen of them by myself!"

"And there isn't a single Chinaman left to-day in the whole hamlet! Apparently they have been cautioned and have left. And yesterday they filled the farmhouses completely!"

"No, they are all here! They are sleeping on the straw in the yard!"

In reality, all the Chinese had disappeared.

"The scoundrels!" the soldiers said, in disgust and amazement. "We might have guessed it from the start! They looked at us like so many wolves! Take that lame landlord of ours, for example: yesterday we swiped some potatoes from his bin, and he nearly devoured us with his eyes! We ought to kill the whole lot of them!"

An hour passed, and another. They did not send any protection. The supervisor, covered with all kinds of weapons over his cloak, was sitting and listening intently. The rest were dozing. How stupid, how stupid all this was! Here we were sitting, without any aim, without any purpose. Maybe we should soon have to fight to our last breath, in order not to get alive into the hands of men whom we had maddened by our treatment. And what was this all for?

On the table lay a book, *Buch der Lieder*. Grechikhin, who was studying German, had been reading it. I opened the book.

Am Ganges duftet's and leuchtet's,  
Und Riesenbäume blühen,  
Und schöne, stille Menschen  
Vor Lotosblumen knien.

Old, familiar, beautiful sounds. Something significant, pure, and bright expanded before the soul. And how amazingly distant all this was from the surrounding darkness and mire, and the nearness of needless bloodshed!

There was no attack on that night. It is very likely that the Chinese had informed the Hung-hu-tzüs that we had been warned, and were prepared for the attack.

Next morning we decided to transfer ourselves to the village where the other hospitals were stationed, so that we might be all together. The chief surgeon drove to the treasury at Kuan-cheng-tzü Station and wrote a letter to the senior chief surgeon. In his letter he asked him to crowd himself a little and give room in the village for our hospital, since, according to the order of the Chief of the Sanitary Unit of the Third Army, we were supposed to be stationed in that village. Shántser and I rode off with the letter.

We were received by a tall, wizened old man, with a greyish beard, wearing the shoulder-straps of a Councillor of State. He scanned Davýdov's letter slowly and methodically, once, twice, three times.

"Here it says, 'according to the order.' What order?" he asked.

"What order? Why, the order that was sent to us bore your signature!"

"Oh, *that* order! But there is no room here! Everything is occupied here! Aren't you comfortable there?"

We explained to him that we were located there all by ourselves, and, in case of an attack of the Hung-hu-tzüs, would be utterly helpless.

"You are afraid of the Hung-hu-tzüs?" the old man asked, with a smile. "But you have a detachment that is armed with rifles!"

"You have in your village seven detachments and a whole company of defence, and yet you did not furnish us with even a squad for last night!"

"Hem!" The old man grew silent, as though he had not heard our retort.

"Your men have spread themselves over a great territory here," Shántser continued. "In your hospital, for example, a separate large farmhouse has been set aside for the office, a separate one for the drug-store. That is too much of a luxury!"

The old man glanced pensively at the letter, then he looked at our shoulder-straps.

"You are junior surgeons!"

"Yes."

"Well, in any case, I consider it quite impossible to settle this question with you people! I shall send a letter to your chief surgeon to-day, in which I shall ask him to call on me to-morrow at nine o'clock in the morning, when we shall take the matter into consideration. That is the best I can do for you!"

We drank tea with the junior surgeons of his hospital. With them matters stood as almost everywhere—the junior surgeons spoke with contemptuous disgust of their chief surgeon, and stood in a cold, official relation to him. He had at one time been the chief surgeon of a regiment, then he had long served as the secretary in connection with a large military hospital; and from there he found his way to the war as chief surgeon. He had long forgotten all about medicine, and was existing only by means of official documents. The surgeons laughed aloud when they heard that Shántser had considered it superfluous to maintain a separate large building for the office.

"But that's where the soul of the whole hospital is! Surgeons, drug-store, sick-rooms—all these are unimportant appendices to the office! An unlucky scribe is working there for twenty hours a day—he writes and writes! We live in farmhouses adjoining that of the chief surgeon, and we meet him a dozen times a day! Yet we receive from him each day docu-

ments with 'orders?' You ought to look at his hospital orders—they are whole folios in size!"

The old man, it turned out, was awfully frightened when he heard of the imminent attack of the Hung-hutzüs, and wouldn't think of sending us even a single soldier for protection!

The surgeons went with us to visit another hospital. There the chief surgeon appeared to be a real man. But his own hospital was located in very crowded quarters, because the "Councillor of State" had taken possession of all the buildings! It so happened that the Councillor of State just then entered.

"Have you heard it? They are afraid of Hung-hutzüs," he said, with a smile.

"That is natural! What sense is there in remaining there?" answered the chief surgeon whom we were visiting. "They have driven us five miles from hell, and so we all ought to keep together!"

"What an amazing arrangement this of Chetýrkin is!" Shántser said, laughing. "What sense was there in sending us here?"

"It is not for us to pass judgment," the old man said, dryly and sternly. "It may be that you would have made worse arrangements still!"

"No, that would be hard to do!" one of his surgeons replied, with a smile.

The conversation turned on the Mukden defeat, and on the outlook for peace.

"When will all this dirty business come to an end?" somebody said, with a sigh.

The old man opened his eyes widely in perplexity.

"What dirty business? What are you talking about?"

Next day we moved to their village, and two days later there arrived a new order of Chetýrkin for all of us to break camp and proceed to the city of Mai-mai-kai, about ninety versts to the south. The

itinerary was laid out with the usual precision: the first day to stop there and there, after a march of 18 versts; the next day to stop there and there, after having made 35 versts; and so forth. On the evening of March 25 we were to be in Mai-mai-kai. All this was arranged without the slightest knowledge of the quality of the road, as we soon found out, and so we marched without reference to the given itinerary.

From the officers who brought the order we learned a pleasant bit of news, namely, that our corps was being transferred from the Third Army to the Second. That meant that we were leaving the solicitous care of General Chetýrkin.

In the morning we began the march.

The snow had melted. The roads were still muddy, but had begun to dry out. In the fields could be seen Chinese at work. They were digging up the kao-liang roots with their mattocks and depositing piles of manure on the fields. The further south we proceeded the more the Russian spirit became apparent. On the road we more and more frequently met two-wheeled carts loaded with Chinese movables and with Chinese women and children, all of them hurrying north.

We also came across destroyed farmhouses, from which the roofs had been removed for fuel. There was an increasing number of them. In place of hamlets there were heaps of clay, straw, and remnants of walls. The habitable farmhouses were crowded with Russian soldiers. The Chinese became more and more scarce. Again there dashed over the fields packs of homeless, frightened dogs. The trees fell under the strokes of Russian axes.

Old familiar pictures! We were entering the native atmosphere. The supervisor again became glib of tongue and self-confident; the chief surgeon again

arbitrarily cleaned out the Chinese at the lodgings, paid them in half rubles and rubles, and called them thieves.

After three days we arrived in Mai-mai-kai. The town was overcrowded with troops and fugitive peasants. It was awful to enter a farmhouse which was occupied by the Chinese. It swarmed with heaps of men, just as a decaying piece of flesh swarms with maggots. In the stench and dirt squirmed men, women, and children, healthy and sick alike.

At the Staff and at the lazaretto they talked of the possibility of a retreat in the near future. They said that no Japanese could be found for eighty versts ahead of us, and that they were making a wide detour to the north. They said that the Japanese had sent us an invitation to go to their Harbin for Easter confession. We recalled how they had but a short time ago invited us to Mukden for Shrove-tide dumplings. It was resolved to abandon the Si-ping-kai positions, we were told, and to retreat beyond Sungari to Harbin.

## CHAPTER X

### IN EXPECTATION OF PEACE

WE were stationed some versts to the north of Mai-mai-kai, near the Mandarin Road.

In the morning a strong wind was blowing. Towards night it subsided and the sky was ruddy with the evening glow. Not far from our station a crowd of artillerymen was gathered near a well. I walked up to them. On the ground, stretching out her head, a horse lay motionless, slowly opening and closing her eyes. Nearby stood a second-captain of artillery. We saluted each other.

"Is the horse sick?" I asked.

"Yes. She could barely walk all the time. We just gave her some water to drink, and she fell down, and cannot rise. Her back is as though it were broken. It is all the result of February 25," added the captain, lowering his voice so that the soldiers might not hear. "A mass of horses broke down during the retreat, and now they are dying like flies."

"Are you stationed near here?"

"Yes, we have stopped over there in the hamlet for the night. We shall move again in the morning."

"Where?"

"Where? To the north, of course," the captain answered, with a smile.

"What do you hear about the Japanese?"

"They say they are near Kirin." I walked away from the well with him. "Have you heard? There have been conversations about peace since March 18."



"You don't say!"

"Our Army Staff has received to-day the information that the Emperor has summoned the Zémski Sobór and has informed them that the war has been unsuccessful for us, and that it was necessary to make peace."

Upon arriving home, I told our men about it. There were no soldiers of the rank and file in the farmhouse, but five minutes later the soldiers were talking with animation in all the yards, in all the farmhouses, and joyous inquiries and laughter were heard. Everywhere there sounded the proclamation:

"The eighteenth of March! The eighteenth of March!"

In the calm heavens, above the glow, shone the narrow crescent of the new moon. There was a bright and happy feeling in one's soul, one felt like talking, like telling every passer-by that the bloody madness had come to an end, one felt like believing it and assuring others of it. And everywhere you heard:

"The eighteenth of March! The eighteenth of March!"

Two soldiers approached me.

"Your Honor, is it true that there will be peace?"

"That's what they say."

"Tell us, will we have to pay *him*?"

"Very likely."

They fell to musing, and looked disappointed.

"If so, it would be better to continue fighting."

An incredible, unheard-of defeat had just fallen upon our Army, and everywhere they were talking of only one thing, of rewards! The staffs swarmed with endless recommendations for rewards, and the rewards began to pour forth as if from a horn of plenty.

One could observe the same thing as after the Sha-ho Engagement, after the Liao-yang Battle, after all the previous battles. Almost every day the Army Or-

ders contained very long lists of persons rewarded with military decorations. If one were to count up all those thousands of Stanislaus, Annas, and Vladimirs with the swords, all those innumerable St. Georges of the soldiers, one might conclude that this was the most victorious of all wars and had crowned our Army with most glorious laurels. It was as though with this downpour of crosses the Army wanted to conceal from itself and from others that sense of shame which secretly consumed it, as though it wanted to show and tell the whole world: yes, for some reason hopeless failures have stubbornly pursued us, but every general, every soldier is performing marvels of valor—they are every one of them remarkable heroes.

The officers who had taken part in the Turko-Russian War were struck by this superabundance of rewards. According to their statements, it was not at all unusual for an officer who had gone through two or three important engagements to have received no rewards. A red Anna sword-knot "for valor" or a little decoration with the swords were considered precious distinctions. Now a red sword-knot, which in the officers' lingo is called "cranberry" or "bill-berry," became a mere tag bearing witness to the fact that such-and-such an officer had been present at an engagement. In the staff they said outright that every one would receive two rewards in rotation for the war. The Commander of the Tenth Army Corps, the famous K. V. Tserpitski, one of the few generals who proved himself worthy of his post, was compelled to issue the following strange order to his corps:

"In the future I sternly forbid any one to recommend all the officers *en masse* for rewards, and ask that only those be recommended who deserve a reward for their valor, bravery, activity, and faithful execution of duties imposed upon them!" (Order to the troops of the Tenth Army Corps, 1905, No. 39.)

I came across an unlucky officer of artillery who had not received a single reward during the whole war. He said wittily, "I will send my card to the 'Nóvoe Vrémya': an officer who has received no reward in the theatre of war!" That was indeed such a rarity that the card fully deserved a place in the newspaper.<sup>1</sup>

Military rewards, decorations with the swords, were given to commissaries, controllers, and surgeons of the Rear.

Such important rewards as the Vladímir with the swords were given to staff officers "for distinction at various times in matters against the Japanese." The Stanislaus of the second degree with the swords, also "for distinction in various engagements with the Japanese," was received from Kuropátkin by "a reporter, a nobleman by descent, Nemírovich-Dánchenko!" (Order of the Commander-in-Chief, 1904, No. 755.)

They were especially lavish with rewards to members of the staff, and against these the feelings ran high in the Army. The officers with influential relations who came flying from the capitals, frankly called their journeys to the army "Campaigns of the Cross."

There is a story—of course, it is only an anecdote, but it is quite characteristic—of how such an officer reasoned: "It is perfectly natural that an officer in a frontal position should receive a red sword-knot, while I get a Vladímir. He really gets two rewards at once, one in the shape of the sword-knot, and the other because he has survived. And

<sup>1</sup>In the telegrams of the St. Petersburg telegraph agency of November 15, 1906, we read: "Lieutenant Danilóv I, volunteered in the reserve of the fleet, who was awarded the Stanislaus of the second degree with the swords for participation in the engagement of July 28, 1904, on the 'Tsesarévích,' and who declined the reward on the ground that it did not represent his deserts, is by Imperial order to be deprived of his decoration and never again to be recommended for any rewards."

what can there be higher than this reward? But my reward consists of nothing but a decoration!"

The respect for decorations had completely vanished in the Army. Men in Russia, looking at an officer who was decorated with military distinctions, might have considered him reverentially as a hero, but here the sight of such an officer immediately suggested the idea: "He's got a pull!"

Rewards poured down upon the rank and file just as lavishly and senselessly. The higher authorities, when visiting the hospitals, of their own accord attached crosses of St. George to any one who wanted them. Naturally, the authorities did not know the military deserts of the wounded, and the crosses were given to the ones they met first, and to those who gave clever answers to their superiors, or who aroused sympathy by the seriousness of their wounds. They told—even if this is not true, the very possibility of such stories is characteristic—that Linévich, during a visit to a hospital, put a cross of St. George on the breast of a severely wounded soldier, whom, as it later turned out, his own captain had shot for refusing to advance to an attack. At M—— we had a soldier in the hospital whose arm was to be amputated. The regiment had been resting far from the positions when a stray six-inch projectile dropped upon it and tore off the soldier's hand. His Corps Commander accidentally saw him in our hospital, and "out of pity" got the cross for him. This was very nice, so far as the soldier was concerned, but what a profanation of military rewards! The same projectile had injured several oxen from the army herd. Now these oxen deserved the cross not less than the soldier.

We had a soldier by the name of Lisyúnin, who had been wounded in the engagement near the Sha-ho by five bullets, and who, after recovery, was transferred from the line to our detachment. Once, as our patrol

returned to the sentry-box from their beat, one of the soldiers began to unload his rifle and carelessly touched the trigger. The shot shattered the knee of Lisyúnin, who was sleeping. He was discharged. Linévich saw Lisyúnin at the station and awarded a St. George cross to him, whereas the five simultaneous wounds which he had received in a severe engagement had brought about no reward. The accidental wound brought a cross to the soldier, just because he happened luckily to get in the way of the authorities.

To be under the eyes of the authorities, to rub up against the superiors—that was very important for getting the rewards. In the supplement to the order of the Commander-in-Chief (Linévich) of September 19, 1905, under the number 2011, there is an announcement that a silver medal with an inscription "for zeal" on a Stanislaus ribbon "for work and excellent service" was awarded to each of the servants of the Commander-in-Chief's train, Conductor So-and-so (seven of them), and Oiler So-and-so. I have not the slightest doubt that all these persons performed "with excellent zeal" their easy duty in the train of the Commander-in-Chief, which stood in one spot for weeks at a time. As a rule, the Orders were not very generous with rewarding the train servants, and I have seen myself with what "excellent zeal" the conductors and oilers of the military and sanitary trains performed their duties.

The same light-mindedness, the same carelessness in regard to the appropriateness of the rewards was, at times, evinced by the lower authorities. They did not try to give even an external appearance of decency to their recommendations, which were strikingly inconsequential.

The Commander of the Second Army wrote on June 28, 1905:

"Examining the recommendations of the lower or-

ders of one of the units for distinctions of the Military Order, I observe that the exploits of five men of the rank and file are given verbatim in the same expressions, with the fivefold repetition, 'He was the first to rush forward'—that is, there were, consequently, five first ones! Under such conditions it would be hopeless to expect that the recommendations would be successful. The recommendation for rewards is a matter of responsibility—I ask you to keep that in mind." (Order to the troops of the Second Manchurian Army, No. 311.)

Three weeks later he wrote again:

"In a report of May 28, 1905, under No. 1254, the Commander of the Orenburg Cossack Division made representations for awarding decorations of the Military Order to seven Cossacks 'for valor and bravery in an engagement with the Hung-hu-tzüs to the number of eighty-nine men, and in the capture of the number, together with ninety-three horses and ninety muskets, on May 15 of this year, 1905.' The words between quotation marks represent an exact copy of the third paragraph (descriptions of the exploits) of the list of awards. An inquest in this matter, and also an inquiry at the staff of the Seventeenth Army Corps, brought to light the following: (1) that these Hung-hu-tzüs were peaceful men who had been hired by our government to do service for the Russians; (2) that far from attacking our detachment, they allowed it to approach peacefully, and, upon request, surrendered their arms and horses. Under such conditions one may, by stretching the point, admit that the Cossacks thought the armed Chinese they met were Hung-hu-tzüs, but it is impossible to admit in any way that the capture of the Hung-hu-tzüs (in consideration of the fact that they allowed themselves to be disarmed without resistance, although they were three times as strong in numbers as our detachment) forms an exploit

of valor and bravery worthy to be rewarded with decorations of the Military Order. The above compels me to point out to the Commander of the Orenburg Cossack Division that such recommendations undermine the great significance of the decorations of the Military Order, which are intended to adorn for life only the breast of a warrior who has actually manifested great valor. The recommendation was made by His Excellency at random from the reports of the putative heroes themselves, and without the slightest endeavor on the part of the Commander of the Division to clear up the affair, for which he had every opportunity, since the Cossacks were supported by an infantry detachment of volunteers." (Order to the troops of the Second Army, No. 353.)

Even if one should admit the usefulness of distinctions and decorations in general, it is none the less totally indisputable that the rewards, as presented in our Army, could only do harm. It is strange to reward for a mere execution of duty, since the non-execution of duty is severely punished. It is assumed—and every layman looks precisely in this way at military decorations—that the man rewarded has committed something peculiar, exceptional, and extraordinary. But of such men there can be in a whole army only a few dozens—well, a hundred or two. The glory of their exploits should thunder over the whole world and their names should be known to everybody, but in our Army there were many thousands of men decorated, and of the "exploits" of the majority one could learn only from the lists of rewards.

Of course, they spoke everywhere of nothing but rewards, and thought of nothing but rewards. These flitted about, beckoning and teasing, and were so very accessible and so little exacting. A man had been in battle. Around him dead men and wounded ones had

fallen, and yet he had not run away—how could he help laying claim to a reward?

The soldiers, like the officers, began to consider every step of theirs worthy of a reward. At the end of the year, after peace had been concluded, our hospitals were disorganized, and the detachments were sent to the regiments. The soldiers went away beastly drunk. It was very cold, and one of the soldiers dropped on the road and fell asleep. His companion walked back half a verst and asked that the drunken man should be picked up. Next morning he made his appearance at the house of the chief surgeon and asked to be recommended for a medal "for having saved a dying man."

"Are you crazy?"

"Not at all, sir. I ask you most humbly to recommend me for a medal for having saved him, if you please."

"You idiot! Don't you understand? A medal is given when a man is saved at the risk of one's life! But what have you done? You just walked a verst out of your way, and for this you want a medal!"

"As you please. If you do not recommend me, I'll enter a complaint! Why do you insult me?"

Among the soldiers the respect for the decorations was greatly undermined by the circumstance that in rewarding the individual was not considered in the soldier. In an engagement a company has distinguished itself and ten St. Georges are handed out to it. Ten crosses for two hundred men. How are they to be distributed? It's all very well if there are precisely ten who have really distinguished themselves. But why must there be precisely ten? Or why should not these ten be recommended individually? As it is, the company itself distributes the crosses. I have been present at such distributions. Noise, shouts, quarrels. One at once understands that it is not possible



to distribute the crosses in any equitable manner: during an engagement men have no time to watch each other and determine the degree of each other's valor. In the majority of cases, "so as to be fair to everybody," the matter is settled by "casting lots." And thus a St. George is given to some cook who has not even been under fire! Crosses have even been awarded to a sergeant-major, to senior second-officers, or to any one who puts up the biggest amount of vodka. What respect can there be for such a Knight of St. George? The soldiers themselves very carefully distinguished between an individual real Knight of St. George and a collective Knight of St. George. Is it not possible to arrange matters in such a way that an exploit of a whole group should bring about the reward, not of accidental individual representatives of this group, but of the whole group? Such a reward might consist in a St. George ribbon in the button-hole, a medal, or any kind of token which would truthfully indicate what actually took place—the group distinction. But now some are rewarded with crosses as personal heroes, while the others get no reward at all. Or again, the whole group may be rewarded with distinctions attached to its flag, or to its bugles. I can imagine what a sour smile a general would wear if his Anna or Vladímir should be attached, not to his breast, but to the flag or bugle.

We junior surgeons of the hospital had already been recommended by the chief surgeon for a Stanislaus of the third degree, and we had received it for our complete inactivity in the engagement near the Sha-ho. Now after the Mukden engagement the chief surgeon recommended us for an Anna of the third degree with the swords. The Sisters he recommended for gold medals on an Anna ribbon, and the senior Sister, who already had a gold medal, for a silver medal on a St.

George ribbon. In the motivation of the recommendation it said that we had dressed the wounded under hostile fire. We laughed and retorted that we could not have dressed the men, for the simple reason that we had no dressing material. The senior Sister alone, to whom the St. George ribbon was of importance for her society work, stubbornly insisted, amidst the smiles of all, that she had dressed wounds under fire. At the bottom of his heart the chief surgeon hated us all, and we did not restrain our laughter at the rewards even in his presence. But he recommended us for decorations, none the less, because that was an advantage to him; if everybody under his charge distinguished himself, it was clear that he himself deserved a reward.

In Sultánov's hospital matters were carried out on a broader scale. Sultánov recommended Novítskaya for a gold medal on a St. George ribbon, and the other Sisters for a silver medal on a St. George ribbon. Of course, it was said of all of them that they had dressed the wounded under hostile fire, and that Sister Novítskaya had more especially distinguished herself by her self-sacrifice.

But we had a different Division Chief now. By New Year our former Division Chief, a lazy, easy-going old man, had a nervous breakdown and was returned to Russia. His place was taken by a clever, energetic, and independent general. Towards the end of the Mukden Engagement, during the universal panic, he brought his Division in complete order from the left flank to the railway and held back the attacking Japanese. Kuropátkin is said to have told him: "I have come across the first general who has not lost his head." This general did not care to consider in the least the particular sympathies which the Corps Commander entertained towards Sultánov's hospital. A week before the Mukden Engagement he inspected both

our hospitals. He found Sultánov's men in a bad condition, the horses lean and emaciated, and the accounts mixed up; and in an order to the Division he gave a stinging reprimand to almighty Sultánov.

This time the Division Chief protested against Sultánov's recommendation of the Sisters for rewards. He found no basis for distinguishing between Novítskaya and the other Sisters: if she really deserved a gold medal, the other Sisters deserved it equally. Rancorous Novítskaya was terribly put out about it. Sultánov gave a dinner. At one table sat the distinguished people, the Corps Commander, the Chief of Staff, Novítskaya, and Sultánov, while at the other sat the remaining Sisters and the minor members of the Staff. The adjutant informed the Sisters that the intention was to recommend them for gold medals. Novítskaya heard this, and proclaimed in a loud voice:

"It will be very, very unpleasant for me if I am put on a level with *everybody*!"

After that the Corps Commander began to make even more insistent representations to the Division Chief that the other Sisters should be given silver medals. The Division Chief replied emphatically:

"In the list of awards there is a place for special remarks by Your Excellency, and you may write there what you please; but I will not change my recommendation!"

Sultánov himself received a very important reward for the Mukden Engagement. In the month of April the Corps Commander once came to Sultánov's dinner, and during the meal solemnly put around Sultánov's neck an Anna of the second degree with the swords.

We were moved some five versts further to the north to the village of Tai-pin-shan. We were located half a verst from the Mandarin Road on a large farm which was surrounded by clay walls with barbicans and

towers. Here all the wealthy farms were fortified against attacks of the Hung-hu-tzüs. Our landlord was not at home: he had left with his family for Mai-mai-kai. The baggage-train of one of the infantry regiments was stationed on the same farm.

Spring was coming on. The buds were swelling, joyful blades of new grass were bursting forth, and the yellowish meadows had now a greenish sheen. One evening a stout old Chinaman in a fur cap, with a pockmarked, beardless face appeared in the yard. He had an old man's kindly smile. He tottered along on his weak legs, leaning on a long, slender staff. The Chinese workmen looked at him reverently and said to us:

"Big, big captain! Master!"

And they pointed about them, to show that he was master of everything around.

The old man shambled over the yard and examined it. He smiled good-naturedly and gently at us, and asked our permission to enter his house. This was granted. He entered and examined the rooms. Apparently he was satisfied because nothing was broken.

"Shango (all right)!" said he.

"We shall not break anything," we said soothingly to him.

"Shango," he repeated.

He sat down on a box in the yard, puffing at his long pipe. From an adjoining house with raised windows came responses and chanting—they were serving vespers. One could hear strange imprecations about those who were suffering, and about the peace of the whole world. The old man listened with curiosity.

He had no place on the farm to locate himself, for everything was occupied by us and our detachment. Towards evening he returned to Mai-mai-kai.

The Chinamen were driving into the field. It was

sowing time. Two Chinese officials with round balls on their hats, surrounded by a retinue of variegated Chinese policemen with long canes, were calling upon the chiefs of the Russian units. The officials presented a paper in which the authorities asked the Russian chiefs not to interfere with the Chinese in the working of the fields. The Russian chiefs read the paper, magnanimously shook their heads, and informed the officials that, of course, of course, there could be no possibility of interference.

One morning I heard in the distance strange Chinese shouts, which sounded like howls and sobs. I went out. In the next yard, where the regimental baggage-train was located, soldiers and Chinamen were crowding. A row of empty carts stood there, to which were hitched under-sized Chinese horses and mules. Near an empty hole lined with mats the pock-marked old man was sobbing, swaying to and fro on his weak legs. He lamented, strangely raising his arms to the sky and clasping his head with his hands, and, bending down, looked into the opening.

In the hole the old man had put away four hundred puds of kao-liang seed, with kao-liang roots thrown over it. He had arrived in the morning with carts and workmen, in order to haul away the seed for the sowing. When he had uncovered the hole he found it empty.

The chief of the baggage-train, a phlegmatic captain with long, sandy mustaches, was there. He watched the old man with indifferent curiosity, and to the questions of the interpreter shook his shoulders in surprise, saying that nobody had taken the kao-liang.

"Nikoláy Sergyeévich, do you know if, perhaps, one of our soldiers took it?" he asked a lieutenant.

There was something false and unnatural in his voice.

"No."

"Boys, have any of you taken his kao-liang?" the captain said, turning to the detachment.

"Not at all, sir," the soldiers answered, with hesitation, looking aside.

The old man jumped into the hole. He rolled at the bottom of it in convulsive sobs and said something in Chinese. The interpreter explained that the old man asked to be buried in the hole, because now he would die from starvation anyway.

The soldiers walked away in silence, looking sad and morose.

In the evening the orderlies told us that about ten days before the soldiers of the train had accidentally stumbled on the buried kao-liang and had informed the chief of it. The captain gave each of them three rubles not to tell anybody, and on a dark night, when all were asleep, he had the kao-liang transferred to his barns.

I asked the soldiers of the train about it some time later. They told me angrily and with contempt about the matter, and did not try to conceal anything.

"What could we do? Whatever a soldier is commanded to do he must do! But the sin is on the chief!"

Only Groom Mikhéev, who had discovered the kao-liang and had informed the captain about it, said:

"Why did I do it! The Chinaman has lost his last! God will pay me for it!"

The old landlord disappeared and we never saw him again.

All about us the usual looting took place. Houses were destroyed for the fuel, and the last provisions were taken from the Chinese. The Commander-in-Chief issued a hazy order:

"The Commander-in-Chief herewith reiterates the order that the persons in charge shall direct their most

careful attention to the preservation of the Chinese villages in the rear regions of the Armies, and to the regulation of the exploitation of the local supplies of provision and provender." (Order No. 365.)

This order again flashed by like a dry, useless piece of paper and disappeared.

But, in comparison with previous conditions, a new phenomenon could be observed: the non-resistance and meek silence of the Chinese began to disappear. The predictions of the interpreter whom we had met during the retreat, that the Chinese patience would soon give way, was now being fulfilled.

In the mornings they kept finding on the Mandarin Road soldiers and Cossacks with their throats cut or shot.

It was dangerous to travel along the road alone. Transports which went out to forage returned empty-handed, while in the carts lay soldiers with blood-stained bandages. They told of encounters with Hung-hu-tzüs, and of the fact that whole villages of Chinese, arming themselves with anything at hand, were attacking our foragers.

It looked as though this were the beginning of a fierce, merciless guerilla warfare. There were rumors that the Hung-hu-tzüs had lately captured two Russian officers, had put iron rings through their noses, and were leading them around by ropes, with their hands tied from behind. The Hung-hu-tzüs themselves were on horseback, and the prisoners had to run behind. They were left to sleep in the yard, in dirt, and out in the rain.

At the end of April we received from the division staff the following strange telephonogram:

"Important. The Commander-in-Chief has given orders to warn immediately the baggage-trains and institutions located on the rear roads to be ready to

ward off the attacks of mounted Hung-hu-tzüs and Japanese detachments."

What is this? In the rear of our troops hostile detachments are moving about freely and the non-fighting units are ordered to contend with them! Obviously the flanks of our army are open and there are no screening detachments. Then the rumors must be true that some beautiful day the flanking army of the Japanese may cut off the Russian retreat and move upon us from the north.

In the morning we received another order: we were commanded to fortify the farmhouses, to make bar-bicans in the fences, to send out scouting parties, and to build signal towers. Again the nights were dark, and painfully disquieting. The groan of a sleeping neighbor was believed to be the distant sob of a wounded man, and every sound assumed a threatening, alarming significance.

It became more and more difficult to procure forage. The surrounding villages were devastated. The horses starved, for they were fed on rotten straw and rotten kao-liang. An oppressive feeling existed in the positions and in the neighboring rear. Nobody expected any victory. The most rabid patriotic officers did not put any faith in the ultimately demoralized army. It is true they proved that the present positions were literally inaccessible, that a flanking movement was absolutely unthinkable; but precisely the same had been said before the Liao-yang and Mukden engagements, and nobody had taken it seriously. Everybody waited for and expected but one thing: at last the Baltic Squadron would come, would destroy the Japanese fleet, would cut off the Japanese army, and then everything would be changed.

We were told that Linévich had sent the Tsar a secret telegram, in which he informed him that we had fewer troops than the Japanese, that the morale



had completely disappeared, that there was not the slightest hope of victory, and that our army was in danger of starving to death. He considered it his humble duty to inform the Tsar of it, but for the rest, as a soldier, he did not dare to pass any opinion: if he were commanded, he would enter battle, even with one company.

Of Kuropátkin, who remained here in command of the First Army, it was said that he was passing all his time in the front positions and that all men in his entourage had the impression that he was stubbornly and persistently seeking death.

We remained in the village Tai-pin-shan the whole month of April without work. In the beginning of May they transferred us for the same kind of inactivity some ten versts further north, and located us not far from Godziadan Station. Sultánov's hospital had all that time remained standing not far from the corps staff.

The trees and fields were already getting green, and it was growing warm. Everywhere roads were being made and bridges constructed, in case we should have to retreat.

They brought past us from the positions to the station parties of captive Japanese and Hung-hu-tzūs. With them disarmed Russian soldiers were marching under convoy. We asked the soldiers of the convoy:

"Why have these been arrested?"

"Why have our boys been arrested? They have been cursing the officers," the soldiers replied, gruffly and unwillingly.

A secret order was received to open and examine carefully the letters which arrived from Russia for the soldiers, since a large quantity of proclamations against the government were sent in them.

There came news of agitation in Russia, of strikes,

of demonstrations on a large scale. The officers made a witticism:

"Have you heard, in Russia all the babes at the breast have struck? They are demanding freedom of speech and freedom of action!"

"Yes, it's bad to return to Russia now. Affairs are not going right there!"

"Never mind! We shall return and quell the disturbances!"

"No, gentlemen, we shan't return so easily! We couldn't make our appearance in the street! Have you not read that last winter they knocked down a general in St. Petersburg?"

"And what a send-off they gave us when we left! How they shouted 'Hurrah'!"

"Yes, and now you have to walk through the by-streets or else they'll knock you down!"

"But that is a mob!"

"Yes, yes! The same that shouted 'Hurrah'!"

"The devil take it! No, it would be better if our corps were left in Siberia. Later, when all is forgotten, we can return!"

A gloomy lieutenant with a red nose waved his arms with determination.

"There is no use talking! When we return home the students will slap our faces!"

"Well, we will see who will slap whom!"

And his eyes burned ominously.

Beginning with May 17 there were dull rumors in the Army that somewhere near Japan the Baltic Squadron had been beaten by Admiral Togo. The rumors grew from day to day, and became more persistent, more definite, and more improbable. They said that the squadron had been completely destroyed, that the best armor-clads had been sunk, and the rest captured by the Japanese, that Rozhdéstvenski and Nebo-

gátov were in captivity, that only one cruiser had gotten to Vladivostók, while the Japanese fleet had suffered no losses. The most confirmed pessimists retailed these "exaggerated" reports with a smile. But day after day passed, and the improbable rumors turned out to be correct; the formidable fleet which had been so lauded, and in which they had tried to inculcate in the Army such faith—that fleet had gone to pieces, like a mere toy, under the long-range guns of Togo, without having done any harm to the Japanese. It turned out that the Baltic Squadron was a new immense clay gun, which was merely intended to frighten the Japanese by its appearance.

Despair, terror, indignation reigned in the Army. How could all this have happened? The soldiers persistently refused to believe in the destruction of the squadron.

"Maybe it's all only newspaper talk and lies!"

Everybody was filled with deep, ever-growing perplexity. Whence did the Japanese, of whom no one had even heard before the war, get their magic invincibility and strength?

"Well, now peace is certain," everybody said with assurance. "All the limits of madness have been passed."

The rumors crept on, rolled up, and grew in strength. It was said that the Japanese had only been waiting for an engagement at sea, and now were ready to strike us with all their strength. They were prepared superbly, and if a battle should take place now all our Army would be swept from the face of the earth.

They whispered into each other's ears the news that when the report of the destruction of the squadron reached St. Petersburg enormous popular demonstrations had taken place, and that fourteen thousand men had been killed.

Rumors of peace became more stubborn. It was said that the Japanese had already started their advance and had suddenly stopped it. The soldiers awaited peace with a certain painful tenseness and longing. Their eyes burned dimly. They said:

"They sent us here like so many cattle to be slaughtered. Nobody knows why?"

At last, on June 1, there appeared the Government's declaration that President Roosevelt had offered the Russian Government his mediation in conducting peace overtures with Japan, and that the Russian Government had accepted Roosevelt's offer.

Now the torture began. This torture lasted all summer, about two months and a half.

Everybody awaited eagerly any bit of news from Washington. The soldiers went every day to the station to buy a number of *The Messenger of the Manchurian Armies*. Roosevelt's mediation is accepted, the plenipotentiaries of Russia and Japan are ready to meet, and suddenly comes Linévich's order, in which he quotes the Tsar's telegram to him: "I put full faith in my valiant troops, that in the end they will, with God's aid, overcome all obstructions and bring the war to a favorable issue for Russia."

And again: the place of meeting of the plenipotentiaries was to be Washington, but the plenipotentiaries would not meet until August, two months hence. Why so long? And in other telegrams we were informed that Oyama had passed over to an active advance. From the positions came rumors that a general engagement was near. The Japanese had landed in Saghalien, had seized the Korsákovski Post, and were rapidly moving into the interior of the island.

The weather was warm and rainy. There was a continuous steam in the air. Rumors of an imminent battle became more persistent, whereas rumors of peace

negotiations and a truce became more hazy. The soldiers said:

"It would be better if they didn't write anything at all, because the despatches only torture a man's heart. To-day you read a paper, and you rejoice at the truce. To-morrow you open a paper and it's a veritable grave! You hate to look at it! It was much better when we didn't think of it and expect it! Now you can't sleep in daytime for the flies and in nighttime for your heavy thoughts! Formerly a soldier could eat a whole potful of cabbage soup, and now four of them eat out of one pot, and there's still something left over. Formerly we couldn't get any bread. Now we sell to the Chinamen, and we still have some to throw away! Nobody feels like eating!"

There appeared in *The Messenger of the Manchurian Armies* a telegram which had been sent by the Commander-in-Chief to the Tsar. In this telegram Linévich said that the Army heard of the peace negotiations with sorrow and that to a man it burned with the desire to contend with the enemy.

The soldiers read the telegram and laughed maliciously:

"Apparently he hasn't made enough money! So he is writing this way! He is getting twelve thousand rubles a month, so what more does he want?"

"Why does he lie to the Tsar? He didn't ask for our opinion!"

"If he had, who would have told him? They once made inquiries among us. The general asked us: 'Are you satisfied with everything?' 'Yes, Your Excellency.' 'Do you get good food?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Have you drunk your coffee to-day?' 'Yes, sir.' The general laughed: 'But what coffee did you drink to-day?' Of course, of course, a soldier says 'Yes, sir' to everything, and that's all!"

Some officers visited us from the positions. Looking

cautiously about them, so as not to be heard by the orderlies, they told us that the other day two battalions had refused to go to the positions.

"Why should we go? There's a truce now! The Tsar wants peace, and the nation wants peace! It's only the generals who don't want it!"

The attitude of the soldiers was changing rapidly and visibly. They saluted the officers reluctantly, and there were constant conflicts.

In the middle of July Witte left for Washington, and everybody breathed more easily; now it was a sure thing! Suddenly the rumor spread that he was recalled home while on his way. The patriotic papers wrote against peace. The city council of Khabáry sent an humble address to the Tsar begging him not to accept peace if the Japanese should ask for an indemnity, or "even for a foot of Russian soil." The Tsar's reply to the address said: "I share fully the sentiments which animate the Khabáry City Council." The appeals of all kinds of insignificant places were received in the same way. Maybe all this was done in order to make the Japanese more yielding. But suppose the determination is really serious!

Everybody was equally tired of the war. They wanted no bloodshed, no unnecessary death. At the front positions there were constant repetitions of such incidents as this: a Cossack patrol gets trapped in a ravine which is on all sides surrounded by the Japanese. Formerly not a single one of the Cossacks would have come out alive. Now a Japanese officer appears on the hill, smilingly salutes the chief of the patrol, and points the way out. And the Cossacks ride off in peace.

The rumors of Witte's recall turned out to be false. He arrived in Washington, and the negotiations began. Everybody followed with eager attention the progress of the negotiations, and they fought for num-

bers of *The Messenger of the Manchurian Armies*. Meanwhile, the local authorities tried to "maintain the spirit" in the troops. The commander of one of our regiments informed the soldiers that peace was wanted only by the Jews and the students.

A general of great importance who had just arrived in the Army said the following in his speech to the soldiers:

"If anybody tells you that peace has been concluded, black his eye!"

*The Messenger of the Manchurian Armies* printed verses "from soldiers," something like this:

Do lead us, our Father, to victory's battle,  
Do lead us against the bold foe!  
We'll follow as thunder on thunder does rattle,  
To war now once more we shall go.  
Our blood shall wash off the appalling disgrace  
Endured in the terrible past;  
The country's contempt we shall nevermore face,  
So lead us, our Father, at last!

The telegrams were most contradictory—one was for peace, the other for war. The final meeting was constantly delayed. Suddenly the news spread: "Peace is concluded!" This turned out to be untrue. Then there came threatening, ominous telegrams: "Witte does not agree to any concessions; a place has been reserved for him on the steamer and Martens is packing his trunks." There was a rumor that the chiefs of the armies had met with Linévich in a military council, and that an attack was being prepared for the next few days.

Never before in all my life had I seen such a universal, deep dejection. The officers sat gloomy and pensive, barely exchanging remarks.

"What madness! They are going to their destruction, and they do not understand! This is simply a historic Nemesis!"

"Yes, the horizon is gloomy. Not only do they go to destruction themselves, but they send us there!"

"It is terrible to think that the very best regiments are likely to lay down arms; they have become too much accustomed to the thought of peace. And just to think of leading them to battle with such a spirit!"

The soldiers were glum and angry. They sold the Chinese their last shirts.

"What is the use of keeping them now? Let us go and have a drink. We thought that there would be peace! So let the treasury look out for it!"



## CHAPTER XI

### PEACE

"HURRAH!" It thundered everywhere in the sunlit air. On the road two artillerymen were driving in a cart, swinging high in the air a sheet of *The Messenger* and shouting:

"Peace! Peace!"

"Hurrah!" was the reply.

Soldiers threw their caps in the air, embraced each other, and shook each other's hands. All read eagerly Witte's telegram to the Tsar:

"Japan has accepted your conditions of peace, which will be thus reëstablished, thanks to your wise and firm determination."

They read this over and over. After the telegram there was an editorial in the usual inflated, false style:

"The near probability of the conclusion of peace will, to some extent, sadden our warriors, who had been awaiting further battles, in order to take off the weight of former failures by new victories. Unto all these worthy warriors of the Russian land be it known that, by dint of their persistent desire for victory, the possibility has been created for Russia to remain now, as in the past, a great power in the Far East."

And again the eyes ran up to the precious telegram. Everywhere there was rejoicing, everywhere could be heard merry laughter, "Hurrah!" The men tore *The Messenger* with Witte's telegram from each other's hands, and in Mai-mai-kai they paid half a ruble for a number.

They say that it was raining when the telegram was received in Harbin. In one of the restaurants an officer turned to those present and pointed to the thick drops which fell from the sky:

"Gentlemen, look! You think that it is rain! No, it is not rain! It is the tears of commissary officers, of generals, and of members of the staff!"

The great struggle of the Christian warriors with the "Dragon" had come to an end. Hypocritical publicists might even now have spoken of the holy exploit undertaken by Russia; but the soldiers estimated the quality of this exploit in an entirely different way. They said with relief:

"We have had enough of wandering over the fields and heaping up sins! Oh, Lord, what sin we have heaped up!"

We waited for the ratification of the treaty. No truce was concluded. In the front positions conflicts kept taking place; every day there came news of men killed. Why these unnecessary sacrifices now? In reply the officers laughed:

"They are hurrying to get those rewards which they have failed to obtain heretofore. The moment peace is ratified there will be an end; the chiefs of the armies will lose the right to give decorations on their own account. You ought to see what's happening! You can't find a single general at home! They're all bobbing up in the front positions!"

The staffs were besieged by officers who came from all sides to apply for rewards.

The medals of our Sisters were confirmed. The junior Sisters received gold medals on St. Anna ribbons "for their extremely efficient and self-sacrificing service in tending the wounded, and for the evacuation from February 12 to 20 of this year." The senior Sister received a silver medal with the inscription "for

bravery" on the much-coveted St. George ribbon, "for her self-sacrificing work in tending the wounded under hostile fire in February, 1905."

The Sisters were radiant and everybody congratulated them. The soldiers of our detachment asked me in surprise:

"Your Honor, why did they get those medals? It's now the second time they have been awarded to them. Have they done more work than the surgeons' assistants? Why did they get them?"

Indeed, they had not done more work than the surgeons' assistants. The Sisters had worked conscientiously, but the assistants' work had been much harder. Besides, during the campaign the Sisters travelled in a carriage, while the assistants, being listed as of lower rank, went on foot. The Sisters received their keep and about eighty rubles a month; whereas, the assistants, rated as under-officers, received about three rubles.

The chief surgeon recommended some eight assistants and hospital attendants for medals. He was told that only two medals would be apportioned to every hospital for the lower ranks. In this case, the rewards were at wholesale and by averages—two to a hospital. In our hospital the sergeant-major and the senior assistant received medals.

The Sisters—I have nothing to say against them. In the war they had not been useless, and in the rear hospitals they had even been very useful; but they had served as a necessary adornment of a battle-scene. They had been "white angels, allaying the torments of the wounded warriors." As being such "angels," universal praises were sung to them, and everybody was prepared in advance to be touched by them and to shower them with rewards. So far as I know, not a single Sister came back from the war without one or two medals. It was sufficient for a bullet to whizz by them

within five hundred feet, or for a shrapnel to burst near them for them to be rewarded with the St. George ribbon. For such Sisters as had acquaintances in the upper circles even that was unnecessary: they received St. George ribbons simply for being acquainted with the powers that be. Thus Novítskaya and the other Sisters of Sultánov's hospital, who had not once been under fire, received those precious ribbons. The Commander of the Army came to our hospital once during the summer. He was very nice to the Sisters and invited them to dinner—the general was fond of feminine society and always invited Sisters to his dinners. During the conversation he asked pretty Sister Leónova if she had worked under fire. Leónova good-naturedly answered that she had not. A week later the Sisters drove to the Commander's for dinner. The Commander once more persisted in asking Leónova whether the Sisters had not worked under fire. He encouraged her to give a positive answer, since he obviously was anxious to give the Sisters the pleasure of a St. George ribbon; but, to the provocation of the other Sisters, Leónova again gave a negative answer.

Let it pass! Let the Russian public look at the orange and black ribbon and at the medal with the inscription "for bravery," and think that before them are self-sacrificing heroines who had fearlessly worked under clouds of bullets, Shimoses and shrapnel. True heroism abhors labels. If the public does not understand this fact, then let its spirit feed on false heroism which is adorned by elegant labels.

There involuntarily arises the desire to subdue these inflated sentiments when I think of the thousands of unknown, truly heroic workers, the surgeons' assistants, who invisibly merged in the limitless grey sea of soldiers. Nobody sang any pæans to them, and their persons did not adorn the bright military scenes. Without attracting anybody's attention, they marched mod-

estly in the rear of the companies with their dressing-packs; they froze together with the soldiers in the trenches; they really worked under showers of bullets and shrapnel, and fearlessly crept up under fire to dress the prostrate wounded soldiers. All the officers of the line spoke of these heroes with true enthusiasm and respect. For their work in the hospital I, too, have an especially warm feeling: not for the Sisters—although I can say nothing against them—but for the assistants and attendants who did their work with such remarkable conscientiousness and who took such warm and friendly interest in the wounded and the sick.

In passing I shall say a few words about the Sisters in this war.

Only a comparatively insignificant part of them were professionals who had already done work as Sisters of Mercy in Russia. The majority, at least, of those whom I observed, were volunteers, who had hastily been instructed in the treatment of the wounded just before they left for the war. What drew them to the war? Apparently there were very few of them who had come because of an "idea." This war did not know any heroic Sisters such as there had been during the Turko-Russian War, heroines who surrounded with an aureole the very image of a Sister of Mercy. That is only natural. The war itself was characterized too much by the absence of an "idea." During the Turko-Russian War, when such men as Garshín entered the lines as privates, it was natural to meet among the Sisters such young women as Baroness Vrévskaya, who was celebrated by Turgénev and Polónski. But now there was enough work in Russia itself for any woman who burned with the desire for exploits and self-sacrifice.

The majority of the Sisters were from that class of women of whom there are so many in all the corners of

Russia: they have finished their studies—what are they to do next? They live at home, give lessons to get pocket-money, suffer ennui, and wait for a chance to get married. At twenty years of age their life seems to come to an end. Suddenly a bright, enticing light appears in the distance, where everything is so unusual, expansive and interesting. There were also some widows and married women who were dying in a dull monotony of life. There were some adventuresses. There were some women who were tired of a calm existence without storms—women with souls of falcons, but with weak heads. Such was the "Boy-Sister" in our hospital, whose eyes flashed with an eager fire the moment danger was near. But there were few dangers; life was monotonous and uninteresting here, and the "Boy-Sister" had returned to Russia even before the Mukden engagement. I asked her in surprise what had driven her out to the Far East, what she was looking for in the front positions, when that real thing which she was trying to find had been left behind in Russia.

"Where is it? Where is it there?" the "Boy-Sister" asked me, in surprise and unbelief.

Maybe there were in the Army some Sisters who were idealists. But I personally did not come across any.

Again, there were quite a number of Sisters from aristocratic families, with great connections. With rare exceptions these Sisters were veritable scourges of those medical institutions in which they served. They were very little prepared for the duties of Sisters; they carried out only such injunctions of the surgeons as met with their approval. They had no respect for the surgeons themselves and managed the institutions at their own discretion. They turned all their activities here into one solid, merry and original picnic with the generals and officers of the staff.

A not lesser evil was created by the Sisters who were wives of officers serving at the front. During a battle,

when the Sisters are most needed, they were good for nothing. At such a time all their thoughts were naturally with their husbands. And if the news came that a Sister's husband had been killed or wounded the Sister completely lost her interest in everything about her. Individual Sisters of this type might have carried out their duties quite conscientiously; but the main thing was that they did their work, not from inclination, but from a desire to be close to their husbands. The less educated among them were extremely sensitive, and they took any remark in regard to mistakes as a personal insult, so that it was exceedingly difficult to work with them. The desire of the women to be near their husbands who went into the hell of these terrible battles was natural enough, but what was extremely unnatural was this—that the government was paying a considerable salary—eighty rubles per month and keep—to the women for being somewhere in the vicinity of their husbands. As is always the case with the Armies in war, the craving for women was enormous. The mere possibility of passing half an hour in the society of women was highly appreciated by the officers. A regimental celebration was no holiday at all if they did not succeed in inviting to it at least two or three Sisters. Sisters that, because of their education and social position, a beggarly lieutenant would barely honor with his acquaintance, were here persistently invited to the dinners of the commanders of the Armies, and brilliant guardsmen made constant efforts to meet them. One of our Sisters, who was rather pretty, once had occasion to drive to the staff of one of our regiments where there was a dentist. The whole regiment was excited, and the officers peeped through the chinks of the door to get a look at the Sister. One of them told me with a smile of perplexity:

“Upon my word, I am not at all bashful, and I have had many affairs with ladies; but here, will you believe

me, when it was proposed that I make the acquaintance of this Sister I stood for five minutes behind the door, was agitated, and didn't dare to enter. I had grown so unaccustomed to the opposite sex!"

When we walked with our Sisters along the highways all those who passed by turned around to look at them. We would be a long distance away, but they would still be standing and dangerously craning their necks.

It was the middle of September. We were waiting for the ratification of the treaty, so as to return to the winter quarters beyond Kuan-cheng-tzü. In the beginning of August we had been moved up to the positions, had opened up the hospitals, and were at work.

The chumiz had been cut and now the kao-liang was being taken down. The fields were beginning to look bare. The days were sunny and warm, but the nights were very cold, frequently with frosts. The soldiers still wore their summer shirts and cloaks. The cloth uniforms and fur jackets had been carried off in the spring to Harbin for safe-keeping.

The soldiers were living in their tents. They froze at night, and walked about with gloomy, pinched faces. Whoever had the money went to Mai-mai-kai and bought himself some Chinese wadded coverlets, but the demand for the coverlets was very great and the price had risen to eight rubles.

Our armorer went to Harbin to fetch the warm things which had been deposited there. The day after his departure there came a document from the military stores to the effect that our things had been transferred to another store, No. So-and-So. A week later the armorer returned without the things. He reported as follows:

"They didn't let me have the things, because the document was made out for the wrong store."



"You ought to have made the proper representation in the old store! They could have written a note on the same document that the things had been transferred to another store."

"I did see about it. But they wouldn't let me have them. They said that you had been properly informed about the matter."

It became necessary to write a new document, and to send once more to Harbin. A week later the things at last arrived.

Many uniforms, fur jackets and felt boots had been so worn that they were no longer good for anything. We asked for new things. The amazing circumstance was revealed that there were no supplies of new clothing in the Army.

During the review of inspection the Division Chief said to the soldiers:

"Boys, keep in mind that it is still unknown when we may return home. The winter is fiercely cold here, and there are no supplies of warm clothing. Watch every bit of warm rag and don't throw away anything, or you will regret it later."

As I listened to the general the chilling question arose before me: Suppose the Japanese did not accept Witte's last ultimatum and the war should be prolonged?

I recalled the story of the officers who arrived in the summer from Vladivostók. They were amazed to see how slowly the fortifying of Vladivostók was proceeding. It was as though Vladivostók were waiting, as Port Arthur had done before, for the Japanese to lay siege to it, before they intended to proceed energetically to fortify themselves.

Yes, here one had to believe everything—everything!

The history of Sultánov's hospital ended with a big scandal. Once, as Dr. Sultánov was getting ready to

visit the Corps Commander, he stepped in to explain to the junior surgeon some misunderstandings which constantly arose in the hospital. During the discussion Junior Surgeon Vaslev referred to Novítskaya as "Sister Novítskaya."

Sultánov exploded. He stamped his feet and shouted:

"Don't you dare to call Agláya Aleksyéevna 'Sister Novítskaya'!"

Vaslev's eyes bulged out in surprise.

"Excuse me! What else is she? She is a Sister of Mercy, and her name is Novítskaya!"

Sultánov madly swung his riding-crop at Vaslev.

"If you ever dare to call her 'Sister Novítskaya' again, I'll strike you with my whip!" he shouted as he left the house.

The affair took place in the presence of many witnesses. Vaslev reported to the authorities, giving an account of all that had taken place. The Division Chief ordered an investigation. In addition to this, Vaslev went to Kung-chu-ling to the officer in charge of the Red Cross and told him of the incident. The Red Cross chief, on his part, sent a messenger to look into the matter. It was a fine mess. The Red Cross chief removed Novítskaya from her position as Senior Sister and sent an old woman in her place. The Division Chief demanded Sultánov's removal, and informed the Corps Commander that he would no longer tolerate the presence of Sultánov in his Division. The Corps Commander made every effort to hush up the affair, but the Division Chief was persistent. He informed the Corps Commander as follows:

"Your Excellency, when I received the Division, you did not inform me that my rights as Division Chief would be limited."

Sultánov was obliged to send in a report of his sickness, and he left for Harbin, together with Novítskaya.

A month later he returned in the capacity of the chief surgeon of a hospital belonging to another Division of our Corps. From that time that hospital was located near the Staff of the Corps. The Corps Commander arranged matters in regard to Dr. Vasiliev so that he was transferred from his corps to another.

In Sultánov's place they appointed a new chief surgeon, a bustling, talkative and perfectly insignificant old man. Under his charge Sultánov's traditions remained in full sway. Count Zaráyski continued to visit his Sister and the hospital authorities crouched before the count. His Sister had a special orderly. She provided herself with a cow, and a soldier was detailed to take that cow to pasture. The Sister suspected him of secretly milking the cow. The soldier said to her:

"Look for another man! I don't care to watch your cow!"

For such a bit of impudence the soldier was put under guard. Sultánov's detachment became very slack. Once the Sisters ordered the soldiers to haul away the mattresses from a hospital tent. The soldiers replied:

"We are no expressmen, to be hauling mattresses!"

The soldiers had no right to give such an answer, but . . . the tent was being cleaned up for a party which the Sisters were giving to the officers of the staff.

So far as my observation in the war goes, our soldiers were very conscientious in doing what they considered it was their duty to do. They would pasture cows, drag mattresses, clean out-houses and do the dirtiest kind of work, but only when they thought that this was work for the government, for the "Treasury." But with us they considered it a crying infringement of discipline if the soldiers declined to carry out the unjust demands of the authorities.

Once as Count Zaráyski was sitting at the house of his Sister, his orderly informed him that the forager of the hospital had furnished their horses with absolutely

rotten hay. (By the way, the hospital was not at all obliged to feed at its own expense the count's horses that came to the hospital almost every day.) The count himself went to the forager and ordered him to furnish good hay. The forager replied that the hay had been provided by the commissariat and that it was all of the same quality. Then the count ordered him to furnish some oats for his horses. The forager declined:

"I haven't the right. Please bring a note from the supervisor."

The count was terribly provoked and mercilessly slashed the forager's face with his riding-whip. Then he returned and said to the supervisor:

"I have just broken my riding-whip over the physiognomy of your forager."

And he rode away from the hospital.

The soldier's whole face and head were covered with red welts and discolorations. He was an extremely active, honest and well-disciplined man. The supervisor's patience came to an end. He was provoked and entered a complaint against the count, detailing all the circumstances. This stirred up matters anew and an investigation was ordered. The count laughed in the face of the supervisor and said:

"The end of it will be that I will once more maul your forager, only this time more thoroughly."

The investigation disclosed the complete correctness of the soldier's behavior and the complete guilt of the count. We expected that the count would at least receive a reprimand in the order to the Corps. But the affair ended with merely "an oral reprimand" to the count. What did this mean? The Corps Commander called him up and said to him:

"Count, why do you beat the soldiers? You know that that is forbidden."

The count announced in the hospital that he did not want the forager to get within his sight, or else he would

slay him alive. But to his acquaintances he said, smiling merrily:

"Do you know I have lately received a reprimand from the Corps Commander for having caused a toothache to a private!"

Peace was ratified. In the middle of October the troops went north to the winter quarters. Our corps stood near Kuan-cheng-tzü Station.

When shall we get home? Everybody was tormented by this question. Everybody was eager to return to Russia. It seems so simple to the soldiers: peace is made, so take your seat in the car and proceed. Meanwhile, day after day, week after week passed. From above there was an absolute silence. No one in the Army knew when he would be returned home. There was a rumor that the first to return home would be the Thirteenth Corps, which had but lately arrived from Russia. Why should it be this corps? Where was justice? It was natural to expect that we would be taken back in the same order in which the troops came here.

At last they published the order of the Commander-in-Chief in which the sequence of the return of the corps was established. It was a most fantastic arrangement. The first, indeed, was the Thirteenth Corps; then followed the Ninth, a few minor units, and the First Army Corps. With this the sequence ended for the present. The order did not consider it necessary to give any information as to when the other corps would leave—at least in what sequence they would be transported. The anxiety caused by the uncertainty, the impassioned longing of the soldiers for their homes—these things should have been taken into consideration. But it is the business of the soldiers not to express opinions, but to wait patiently and humbly for the arrangements of the authorities.

The soldiers were in an indignant and threatening mood.

In Russia and in Siberia all the railways came to a standstill. In Harbin they sold tickets only up to Manchuria Station. Soon all telegraphic communication with Russia stopped. The great October strike was in full sway. Dim and indefinite rumors reached us. There were stories that massacres were taking place in all the cities, that St. Petersburg was on fire, and that a Constitution had been signed.

At last, on October 17, a manifesto was received in the Army. Our supervisor took a copy of the manifesto at the staff and brought it to us. He began to read it to us. Two orderlies entered the room and busied themselves near the beds, as though they were straightening up the room, and listened attentively.

The supervisor looked askance at them.

"What do you want here? Begone!" he shouted sternly. The orderlies left.

We burst out laughing.

"Don't you understand, Arkádi Nikoláevich, what you are reading? This is not a proclamation. This is a manifesto. An Imperial manifesto. Everybody has a right to know."

"That's so. But, all the same, this is not for them!"

All the military authorities, from the smallest to the greatest, were very much excited by the manifesto. "The movable foundations of civil liberty on the basis of a real inviolability of the person, of the freedom of conscience, speech, meetings and associations. . . . No law can be enforced without the approbation of the Imperial Duma, and for the representatives of the people is to be secured the possibility of real participation in the supervision of the legal actions of the authorities constituted by us. . . ." All this had heretofore appeared only in secret proclamations, and mere distant

references to such things had caused the confiscation of letters sent from home to the soldiers. And suddenly this manifesto!

The manifesto was not printed in the orders of the Commander-in-Chief and the soldiers did not read it, but nonetheless they found an opportunity to become acquainted with its contents. They innocently asked the officers:

"Your Honor, is it true that the Emperor has issued a manifesto?"

The officers looked surprised and answered evasively:

"Yes, they say he has. I have not read it myself."

The soldiers listened respectfully, but their eyes looked roguish. Among themselves the soldiers said:

"They are trying to hide it from us! They think we are fools! The soldiers know everything before the Commander-in-Chief!"

A rumor was created and gained credence that the authorities were concealing two other Imperial manifestos; one, of course, about the land, and another, that all the economic funds collected during the war should be divided equally among the soldiers.

With few exceptions, officers were quite indifferent to the occurrences in Russia, or looked upon them with sarcastic hostility. There was in this hostility something infinitely stupid and trifling; it proceeded from the innermost self and was not capable of the most elementary explanation. That which seemed to be the peculiarity only of flour-dealers and cheap shop-keepers was here expressed with aplomb by captains and majors:

"It's the Jews! It's the Jews!"

In enormous labors, unprecedented in history, a new life came into existence at home, a historical fact took place which was shaking the deepest foundation of the

country—millions of people were struggling and taking upon themselves the chains—but here there was only one attitude:

"It's nothing but the Jews! It's all done by Jewish money!"

Shántser retorted smilingly:

"Gentlemen, I am very much flattered by what you say of the Jews; but, truly, you do us too much honor. It appears that the Jews have given you that liberty for which you didn't have any aptitude yourselves!"

The armies stood at winter quarters and pined away in inactivity. Drunkenness was rampant. The soldiers bought with their last money the local Chinese intoxicant, hanshin. The sale of strong liquors was strictly prohibited within the circle of the winter quarters, and Chinamen were constantly being arrested. But, of course, hanshin could be procured in any quantity.

Everybody was tormented by this one persistent question, which demanded an answer: When shall we get home? But the authorities maintained the same indifferent silence. In the soldiers there burned a dull, malicious provocation, and they wanted to do something which would compel the authorities to take them home as fast as possible. They threatened a strike; but what strike could be inaugurated there where people were not doing anything? . . .

Linévich ordered a review of the troops of our army. The soldiers were revived, and they counted the days until the review. They all expected that Linévich would announce when they would be returned home. The review took place. Linévich thanked the troops "for their splendid appearance" and made a speech. The soldiers listened eagerly, with burning eyes, and tried to catch the indistinct, mumbled words. But before the eyes of the Commander-in-Chief were not the



living masses of weary men longing for home, but officially brave troops "of warriors, who, in expectation of future battles," etc. And Linévich said that he did not understand why the Tsar, our father, had made peace. With such braves, he, Linévich, would drive the Japanese from Si-ping-kai like so many rabbits.

After the review Linévich handed eight hundred St. Georges to every corps, to be distributed among the soldiers who had distinguished themselves most. The jokers explained this gift in this way, that Linévich had not expected any peace, and had ordered twenty thousand St. Georges and now did not know what to do with them.

"Eight hundred St. Georges for splendid appearance!" the officers jested. "Formerly they used to give St. Georges for military exploits, and now for splendid appearance!"

The soldiers' mood became more and more threatening. In Vladivostók a riot sprang up and the sailors burnt and looted the city. A riot was expected at Harbin.

We had an unpleasant presentiment.

At last the authorities saw the real state of affairs. So long as things were quiet, they did not think of justice, and superciliously ignored the interests of those in their charge. Now they suddenly bethought themselves of justice. On the tenth of November there appeared an order of the Commander-in-Chief which did away with the former sequence in the transportation of the troops:

"In discharging the reserves to be returned home, I now command that the discharge be brought about in strict justice, in accordance with the arrival of the troops in the theatre of war and also in the order of the summons of the reserves, with the preservation of the following sequence." And there followed the order of the troops in the discharge. "Thus," the order con-

cluded, "all measures have been taken in order to send the reserves home as quickly as possible."

It was also announced that a whole series of steamers had been provided to expedite the transportation of the reserves.

When we went to winter quarters in October it was decided that our hospital would no longer operate and would be disbanded. Nonetheless we were standing for a month without work, and we were neither disbanded nor discharged. At last there came the order of the Commander-in-Chief about disbanding a whole series of hospitals, among them our own. We were in doubt as to whether we should disband the hospital on the basis of this order, or whether we should wait for a special command from the nearer authorities.

It was also known that we should not take our horses back, but would sell them here at auction. We had about seventy horses, and their keep cost about twenty-five rubles a day. One day there arrived from Harbin an export dealer, who bargained for the horses and offered one hundred rubles per head. It was an excellent price, and the Chinese did not buy our large horses, while at the auction they would go for a mere trifle.

The supervisor went to the Staff of the Division to find out if he might sell the horses. The general answered evasively:

"Of course sell them. But I warn you that I am not in it! If there is any misunderstanding with the Controller, you will have to settle matters yourself. That is none of my business."

The supervisor hurriedly wrote a document to the Field Controller of our Corps, asking for advice. The secretary, who took the document to him, returned with it. On the back of the paper the Controller had written in pencil without a signature:

"To be returned. The answer is given verbally."

The verbal answer was that he could not say anything and wanted us to do as we thought best.

Of course we gave it up and did not sell the horses. A month later, after the horses had eaten up about six hundred rubles' worth of provender, they were auctioned off at fifteen rubles.

The railways had stopped running again, and the postal and telegraph communications with Russia were interrupted. But the strike committees sent out the information that the transportation of the troops from the Far East should take place regularly, whether they wanted it or not. The authorities were obliged to enter into relations with the Harbin Strike Committee, and the military echelons proceeded regularly.

The discipline of the troops fell more and more from day to day. The staffs informed the officers that they should treat the soldiers as mildly as possible and that they should not enter into controversies in regard to breaches of respect. The soldiers were kept busy at the stops with gymnastic exercises, military parades and games. *The Messenger of the Manchurian Armies* was filled with letters to the editor from all kinds of sergeants, artillerymen and sanitary assistants. They wrote in this wise: "Friends, it is a shame to worry our Tsar; we must obey the authorities, pray to God, but above all, drink no liquor, because that accursed thing causes all evil. Of course amidst the officers there are bad cheats, but in general the authorities take the best possible care of us, and we must be grateful to them."

One soldier would be reading, while the others listened and laughed.

"Who signed it?"

"Afanási Gurévich."

"Fool! Maksímka, write a letter to the editor: I,

Private Maksím Prokhórov, herewith inform you that they are writing nothing but nonsense. . . .”

In the regiments the cartridges were taken from the soldiers. The officers were ordered to watch carefully that in the soldiers' stations there should be no outsiders, that the soldiers should not be given leave to go to the neighboring villages without tickets, that sudden inquests should be made, and those without tickets should be arrested. . . .

On week days it was to some extent possible to travel on the road; but on holidays, when the soldiers were drunk, this was almost impossible. . . .

One day I met on the road a large crowd of disarmed soldiers, marching under convoy. They were all drunk, and in an ugly mood, and cursed the officers whom they passed. The soldiers of the convoy apparently were in full accord with their prisoners and in no way tried to interfere. The soldiers were from a disbanded detachment of Mishchénko and were on their way to one of our regiments. At a station they became boisterous, looted the stores and got drunk. A company of soldiers was called out against them.

The prisoners said that they had not had anything to eat or drink for two days; that they had been promised to be discharged home in September and that they were still kept there.

One evening, on a holiday, I was taking a walk with two Sisters. The sun had set. Along a narrow path near the bushes we came across a bearded soldier in a short fur jacket, who was somewhat intoxicated. On the border of his cap was the number of one of our regiments.

“Your Honor, how can I get to the staff of the division?” he asked me.

“You see the village beyond the bushes? You have taken the wrong road. You ought to have walked straight ahead.”

"Thanks?"

The soldier kept standing and looked enigmatically at me.

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"From the staff of the division," he replied hastily. But the border of his cap showed that he was not telling the truth. "Your Honor, give me a cigarette?"

I gave him one, and he lighted it.

"Your Honor, when at last will we go home?"

"I do not know," I sighed. "They say in January."

"We won't consent to that. We will strike. My wife writes me from home that the horse and the cow have been sold. She has spent everything and there is nothing left. I must earn something for the next sowing. And here we have to stay through November, December, January! No, we won't consent to that, say what you please!"

"My friend, what have I to do with it? I myself want to get home as much as you!"

"It does not make any difference to you, with the salary you get! You can go on as it is! If I got as much as you, I wouldn't mind waiting for ten years! All we got was forty-three kopeks and a half, and even that has been stopped on account of peace time! For you, waiting is profitable; for us, it means destruction and the beggar's wallet!"

There was no answer possible; of course, so long as I received two hundred rubles per month, it was easier to wait.

"When will they send us home, Your Honor?" the soldier insisted.

"They despatch them now in regular sequence, according to the order. Those who came first will be sent home first."

"I declare, in regular sequence! The Thirteenth Corps has just arrived, and it received a telegram from Linévich to stop at Chita, but it proceeded to Harbin

and then went back. The Ninth Corps also arrived but lately and it has been sent back. How is this? We won't consent to it!"

It was clear that the soldier was making every effort to provoke me to a conflict.

"Well, there is the road to the staff," I interrupted him, and walked on with the Sisters.

"The road! Oh, I knew that without you telling me! I'll go home now! I was on my way to a countryman of mine, but it isn't worth while. It's too late now!"

"Where is your home?" the Sisters asked laughingly.

"In the ——— Regiment."

"But you said you were from the staff?"

The soldier smiled, waved his arm and walked over the field across the beds of kao-liang.

"You'll lose your way! You had better walk along the straight road!"

"Oh, a soldier will find the road anywhere!"

He walked about three hundred steps, then in the darkness abruptly turned towards the road and stopped under a tree near a Chinese grave. We passed by him. The soldier stood there and looked silently at us, then followed us on the road.

"Yes, one is in a fight and another is in a plight!" he said, with a provoking menacing voice; and then there followed cynical curses.

The Sisters were excited. We slowed down our gait to let the soldier pass by us. He went past, but continued to walk slowly, swaying to and fro and cursing. It was now pitch dark. The road was crossed by another. To get rid of the soldier, we silently turned into the cross-road and walked on without talking. Suddenly a bending figure ran diagonally across the field and stopped ahead of us on the road, waiting for us.

There was nothing to do but to turn back and walk toward the village. The soldier caught up to us on the run.

"So that's the way you are fighting!" he said, breathing heavily. "You are out at night with the Sisters for no good."

I beckoned to the Sisters to walk to the village, and I stopped with the soldier.

"Listen, my dear man. Aren't you ashamed to act so scandalously?"

"No. What have you been doing here, eh? Now you went to one side, now to another. You thought you would hide from me. Sisters of Mercy! What were you doing?"

He pressed against me with his left shoulder and flung back his clenched fist.

"So that's the way you are fighting! Give me five rubles, you son-of-a-b——! Or else I'll knock you down!"

"Of course you won't get the five rubles! Just stop and think why we tried to get away from you!"

"I know. I understand everything!"

"No, you do not understand! We went away because you are drunk!"

"No, I am not drunk."

"Honestly, how much did you have to drink to-day?"

"Upon my word, as sure as I live, I've had only two cups of hanshin, and I am not drunk!"

"I'll tell you what: Let us go to the village and ask the first man we meet whether or not you are drunk! If they say no, I'll give you ten rubles!"

We walked to the village.

"God be with you! Let me have three rubles!" he suddenly said.

"What? No, let us go. First let us ask!"

"Won't you give me one ruble?"

"I won't!"

"All right!" the soldier said menacingly, "you won't continue to have a good time long!" . . .

He turned into the bushes. . . .

On the eighth of October we junior surgeons of the hospital received a document in which we were told that we were struck off the hospital list and were ordered back to Russia to report to the Moscow Military Medical Department. Strictly speaking, this was a transfer to the reserves, and in this case we ought to have received travelling expenses to the place of our summons. To avoid this, we were not discharged, but "ordered back" to Russia.

And so it is the end. Soon we shall be free men once more. Soon our relations to those about us will be determined by free valuations and not by the appearance of shoulder-straps and by the number of stripes and stars upon them. The end!

We had passed almost eighteen months in Manchuria. We had experienced many privations and many hardships. There arose a desire to sum up matters, to give ourselves an account of what we had done there. It was a sad sum. The equipment of our movable hospital had cost about a hundred and fifty thousand rubles and its monthly budget amounted to about six or seven thousand. One hundred and twenty-five men had been torn from their daily work in Russia and had been attached to the hospital. What had we been doing there? In the interim between the battles we had been standing for months packed up, or had been receiving a few invalids in order to send them on immediately. When an engagement was in progress, we immediately packed up and hurriedly went back. If we had not been there, if our hospital had not existed at all, absolutely no one would have been worse off for it, and no one would have even noticed our absence.



## CHAPTER XII

### HOME AGAIN

GRECHIKHIN, Shántser and I left together from Kuan-cheng-tzü to go to Harbin. With us travelled a number of officers and surgeons who were also being sent back to Russia.

Next morning we arrived at Harbin. Here the mood of the soldiers was even worse than at the positions. . . .

Terrible dramas took place. In Vladivostók, Artillery Captain N—tski met a soldier on the street. There were two St. Georges on the soldier's breast and he walked with his arms hanging loosely at his sides and a cigarette in his mouth. N—tski stopped the soldier and reprimanded him because he had not saluted. Without saying a word the soldier swung back his arm and struck the officer on the side of his head with his fist. Following the customary tradition among officers, N—tski drew his sabre and split the offender's head open. This was noticed by some soldiers who were stationed at the Chúrkin Barracks. They came running out and started for N—tski. N—tski ran into the officers' club and locked himself up, while the soldiers tried to enter. In the club there were a few officers. N—tski shot himself. The soldiers broke in and mauled the officers terribly. They beat them with clubs and kicked them with their boots, especially on the head. Two of the officers died in a few days in the hospital. . . .

In Harbin all the traffic on the railway was in the hands of the Strike Committee. . . .

In the order of the Commander-in-Chief it said that the transportation by rail of the officers who were being returned to Russia individually was to take place in strict sequence according to the order of entry. But in Harbin we learned that this order, like so many others, was not at all observed. Those who knew best how to use their elbows were the first to get into the train. That was exceedingly unpleasant: it would have been better if we could wait a day or two for our turn, in order to take our places in the cars without fighting for them.

The train drew into the station at noon-time. The officers, surgeons and military officials poured out on the platform. Everybody tried to get into the front row, in order to be the first to get into the cars. Everybody looked angrily askance at his neighbor.

The train stopped and we made a rush for the cars. But the cars were locked and at every door stood a gendarme.

"Open the door!"

"As soon as the first bell rings it will be opened."

Everybody crowded about the steps of the cars. Everybody tried to make his way through the crowd by stooping and then straightening himself up in front of the crowd.

"Don't you see that people are standing here? Where are you trying to go to?"

"Excuse me, I did not touch you!"

"Don't push! What a shame!"

The passengers grabbed the door-knobs and the banisters, so as not to be pushed aside. A lieutenant of sappers peeped in between the cars and noticed that the door leading into one of them was not closed. As the gendarme turned aside, he quickly jumped on the buffer, leaped over another, and disappeared in the car. A tall military surgeon tried to catch the sapper and in disgust shouted:

"Oh, oh, lieutenant! Where are you going? What right have you . . ."

But suddenly the surgeon himself jumped on the buffer and disappeared in the car.

The lieutenant returned from the car.

"Gentlemen, the car is already full!"

"How so?"

The gendarme flew to one side. Roughly and angrily pushing their way with their elbows, the passengers began to jump upon the buffer. They crowded together and jumped over those who fell down. It was disgusting, but immediately the thought flashed through my mind: If you don't look out the same thing will happen to-morrow and the day after to-morrow. And so I rushed after the others onto the buffer.

In the narrow corridor of the car people were crowded together and cursing. Near me the closed door of the compartment was slightly opened. I quickly pushed my foot into the opening and made my way into the compartment. In it were Shántser and four strange officers.

"Pardon me! Everything is occupied here," one of them said to me.

"Never mind; I won't go away, anyway!" I retorted.

"What do you mean by that? The compartment is intended for four people, and there are already six in it!"

"Where are the six? There are only five of you here!"

"We have reserved a seat for a friend who is on the platform with our things."

"That's none of my business! He is not here and I shall be seated!"

Voices were raised, and in the whole car, in all the compartments and in the corridor, they shouted, quarrelled and cursed. New passengers tried to get into our compartment.

"Gentlemen, let us settle the matter," I proposed. "I shan't leave, anyway, and meanwhile other passengers are trying to get in. Let us form a common defensive union and we'll arrange matters somehow later."

Everybody laughed, and the union was formed.

All about us they were still cursing and shouting. The next compartment was occupied by a negro in a shining silk hat and an expensive fur coat, together with an elegantly dressed woman, whose face was painted and whose eyes were heavily blue-pencilled. This couple had been dancing a cake-walk in the Harbin *cafés chantants* and now was on the way to an engagement at Manchuria Station.

A staff-captain, with faded shoulder-straps, shouted at a gendarme:

"I ask you, how did these Ethiopian mugs get here? We didn't see them in the crowd when we stood near the cars! You must have been bribed to let them in from the other side! We have been shedding our blood here and we have no places! But they have been doing a cake-walk and so a special compartment was found for them!"

At last the train started. The officers seated themselves and made themselves comfortable in the places taken by us all. Thank God! Be it as it may, at last we were homeward bound! Ahead of us was Russia!...

